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ANNE R.

WHEREAS Our Truſty and Well-beloved Richard Smith, *of our City of* London, *Bookſeller, has humbly repreſented unto Us that he has, with great Labour and Expence, prepared for the Preſs, a new Edition of the Sermons, and other Works, written in* Engliſh *by the Right Reverend Father in God Dr.* William Beveridge, *Biſhop of St.* Aſaph, *Deceaſed; and has therefore humbly beſought Us to grant him Our Royal Privilege and Licenſe, for the ſole Printing and Publiſhing thereof for the Term of Fourteen Years: We being willing to give all due Encouragement to Works of this Nature, tending to the Advancement of Piety and Learning, are graciouſly pleas'd to condeſcend to his Requeſt: And do therefore, by theſe Preſents, grant to him the ſaid* Richard Smith, *his Executors, Adminiſtrators, and Aſſigns, Our Royal Licenſe for the ſole Printing and Publiſhing the* Engliſh *Works of the ſaid late Biſhop of St.* Aſaph, *for the Term of Fourteen Years, from the Date hereof; ſtrictly forbidding all Our Subjects within our Kingdoms and Dominions, to reprint the ſame, either in whole or in part; or to import, buy, vend, utter, or diſtribute any Copies thereof re printed beyond Seas, during the aforeſaid Term of Fourteen Years, without the Conſent and Approbation of the ſaid* Richard Smith, *his Heirs, Executors, and Aſſigns, under his or their Hands and Seals firſt had and obtained, as they will anſwer the contrary at their Perils. Whereof the Maſter, Wardens, and Company of* Stationers *are to take notice, that the ſame may be entered in their Regiſter, and that due Obedience be rendered thereunto.* Given at Our Court at *Keſingnton* the 5th Day of *June*, 1708. in the Seventh Year of Our Reign.

By Her Majeſty's Command,

SUNDERLAND.

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PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON A

CHRISTIAN LIFE;

Or, NECESSARY

DIRECTIONS

For its *Beginning* and *Progress* upon

EARTH,

In Order to its Final Perfection in the

BEATIFICK VISION.

PART II.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

late Lord Bishop of St. *Asaph*.

Written by him in his Riper Years, and Printed from his Original Manuscripts.

The FOURTH EDITION, Illustrated and Adorned with SCULPTURE.

LONDON:

Printed for R. SMITH, at the Sign of Bishop *Beveridge*'s *Head*, in *Pater-Noster-Row*, near *Cheapside*.

MDCCXV.

By the late Majesty's Royal Privilege.

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THE PREFACE.

THE kind Reception which has been given to all the other Works of this incomparable Author, particularly to his *Private Thoughts*, written in his Younger Years, has encouraged the publiſhing of another Volume of his *Thoughts*, upon Subjects of the moſt Importance to the *Chriſtian Life*, in all the chief Scenes of it; and thoſe compos'd when Age and Experience in the Courſe of his Parochial Miniſtry had taught him, what Directions were moſt neceſſary for the

Conduct of every Diſciple of *Chriſt*, through all the Stages of *that Race that is ſet before us*, that he *ſo run that he may obtain*. Accordingly the Reader is here furniſhed, not only with ſuch Inſtructions, as are moſt proper for the Entrance upon this Race, and the early Diſcipline of thoſe who are new liſted under *Chriſt*'s Banner; but alſo with ſuch other Points both of Faith and Practice, as are moſt fit to be afterwards inculcated and preſs'd upon them, for their ſucceſsful carrying on of this Holy Warfare, and *finiſhing* their *Courſe*, ſo as at laſt to attain the *Crown of Righteouſneſs*, laid up for all thoſe that *continue Chriſt's faithful Soldiers and Servants to their lives end.*

As in his *Private Thoughts and Reſolutions*, this Excellent Biſhop ſeems to have chiefly aim'd at ſettling his own Principles, and regulating his Practice, as became a Follower of the Holy

Jeſus;

Jeſus, and a Miniſter of his Goſpel: So in theſe which are more *Publick*, he carries on the ſame pious Deſign with reſpect to others, and Executes that Sacred Office, for which Thoſe were to prepare him. Indeed, great and indefatigable as his *Labours* were (for few ever labour'd more) the *End* of them was always *the Salvation of Souls*. And as that Spirit of Piety which runs through all his Writings, together with his plain, unaffected, familiar, and yet moſt ſolid way of Argument and Perſwaſion, are both admirably adapted to this great End: (to ſay nothing of all his other daily and unwearied Pains in the Miniſtry while living) ſo, through God's great Bleſſing upon his Endeavours, they were then, and have been ſince crowned with great Succeſs; and it is the Hopes and Prayers of all good Men, that they may continue ſo to be, to the end of the World, and

daily add to our Holineſs, and his Happineſs.

Among many Inſtances that might be given of this happy Succeſs, I have now one before me in a Relation of the Behaviour of one of this vigilant Paſtor's Flock, in his laſt Sickneſs, as it is Atteſted by Eye-witneſs of it. I will not trouble the Reader with the Particulars; the Sum is, That this pious Gentleman, with his laſt Breath, expreſſed ſo much Reſignation to God's Will, and ſo little fear of Death, ſuch Comfort in reflecting upon the better part of his Life, eſpecially his Charity to the Poor; and ſo much Zeal in recommending that Duty to thoſe about him; and above all, ſuch an Anticipation of thoſe Extaſies of Joy and Happineſs which he was going to in another World, and ſo uncommon and enlarg'd an Underſtanding of the great Myſteries of Religi-

on; that if, in the midſt of theſe Holy Raptures, he had not own'd his great Obligations to Dr. *Beveridge*, for theſe Spiritual Bleſſings, yet we might have eaſily judged that ſo great a Proficient in the School of Religion, could be indebted, under God, to the Care and Inſtruction of no leſs a Maſter for ſuch extraordinary Acquirements.

And, with reſpect to that Good, which it is piouſly hoped this great Prelate's Works have done ſince his Death, and may continue to do daily; it has been obſerv'd by ſome devout Perſons, that ſince the Publication of them, our Churches have been generally fuller than they us'd to be; to which, as nothing would contribute more, than that Spirit of Devotion and true Piety, which in all his practical Writings this Holy Man both expreſſes himſelf, and labours to create

in others: So, if after all theſe Pious Endeavours to Cultivate and Promote it in the World, we are ſenſible of the leaſt Growth of it, I know not why we may not aſcribe ſo good an Effect to the Bleſſing of God upon ſo probable a Cauſe.

However, if the Piety of ſome among us, which we hope increaſeth, be not a ſufficient Argument of a probable Increaſe of true Religion, to be expected from the Influence of this great Man's Works, yet I am ſorry to ſay, that the Wickedneſs of others does abundantly make up that Defect; I mean the reſtleſs Endeavours of all the Enemies of God and Religion, to Diſcredit and Defame them; if by any means they could be able to ward ſuch a Blow to the Kingdom of Darkneſs, as they ſeem to apprehend from his pious Labours. And what wonder if thoſe who mock

God, and would bring Religion it ſelf into Contempt, uſe their utmoſt Endeavours to blaſt the Reputation of an Author, whoſe Writings are ſo eminently ſerviceable to Religion, and tend ſo much to advance the Glory of God? All their Attempts of this Nature, are ſo many Arguments of the Excellency of what they would decry; they are the Teſtimonies even of Enemies, in behalf of thoſe admirable Books which they pretend to Ridicule: And all the Scorn and Contempt they expreſs upon this Occaſion, reflects more Honour upon Biſhop *Beveridge* and his Works; I had almoſt ſaid, even than the Approbation and Eſteem of all his and Religion's Friends. So much Good does God in his Infinite Wiſdom and Mercy produce out of the greateſt Evil, by turning all the Wit and Malice of theſe Reprobates againſt themſelves, and making them, even againſt their own

Wills,

Wills, Inſtruments of ſounding forth the Praiſes of this Excellent Writer, at the ſame Time, and by the very ſame Means, that they vainly attempt to Diſhonour and Reproach him. As the Devils themſelves were forc'd to own our Bleſſed Saviour, though they knew he came on purpoſe to deſtroy them. It were only to be wiſhed, that in this, as in moſt other Inſtances, thoſe *Children of this World* were not *in their Generation*, ſo much *wiſer than the Children of Light*. 'Tis true, we may as well fear, that Dogs ſhould bark out the Moon, as that the utmoſt Malice of theſe Enemies to Truth, ſhall ever be able to ſully a Reputation, that has long ſhin'd with ſo much Brightneſs, among all Learned and Good Men, both at home and abroad: Inſomuch, that when this Illuſtrious Prelate was dying, one of the Chief of his Order, deſervedly ſaid of him, *There goes one of the*

greateſt, and of the beſt Men that ever England *bred.* No, we have ſeen that all their Attempts againſt him, do but add Luſtre to his Fame: However, it cannot be leſs the Intereſt of Religion to promote the Works of ſo able a Divine, than it is that of Atheiſm and Irreligion to oppoſe them; and if all good Men would ſhew as much Zeal in the Defence of them and their great Author, and be as induſtrious to recommend both his Writings and Example, as Atheiſts and Libertines are to Obſtruct the Influences of both, this would ſtill be another Addition to the Glory of ſo great a Name; and the good Effects we might hope for, on the Lives of Men, from ſuch Excellent Books, diſperſed into many Hands, would be, at once, the beſt Atteſtation that could be given to the wondrous Benefit and Uſefulneſs of them, and alſo the moſt effectual Means to ſtop the Mouths of

Gain-

Gainſayers, by leſſening the number of them daily, and bringing them over from Infidelity and Atheiſm, to the Cauſe of God and Religion.

And, I cannot cloſe this Preface better, than with earneſt Prayers to God, that this, and all the other Works of Biſhop *Beveridge* may have that Bleſſed Effect; and that in return to all the Malice of thoſe, who ſeem to Envy us the great Good we may hope for from ſuch Pious and Inſtructive Diſcourſes, they may, by degrees, inſtill even into their Breaſts, ſome of that Spirit of Piety, diffus'd through every Page; and of Atheiſts and Libertines, make them ſober Men, and Chriſtians.

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THOUGHTS

UPON

Chriſtian Education.

IF the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion were well rooted in the Hearts of all Mankind, what excellent Fruit would they produce! The Earth would put on another Face, bearing ſome reſemblance of Heaven it ſelf: Idolatry, with all ſorts of Wickedneſs and Vice, would be every where diſcountenanced and ſuppreſſed; for all would worſhip the one living and true God, and him only: There would be no more *Wars*, nor *rumours of Wars*; *Kingdom* would not riſe *againſt Kingdom*, nor *Nation againſt Nation*, but all Princes would be at Peace with their Neighbours, and their Subjects at Unity among themſelves, ſtriving about no-

thing but which ſhould ſerve God beſt, and do moſt good in the World. Then Piety, and Juſtice, and Charity, would revive and flouriſh again all the World over, and particularly in the Church and Kingdom to which we belong. Then the Prayers would be read twice a Day in every Pariſh, as the Law requires, and all People would heartily join together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the World. Then all that are of riper Years would, at leaſt every Lord's-Day, celebrate the Memory of the Death of Chriſt, by which their Sins are expiated, and the Moſt High God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father: And as all ſorts of People would thus continually worſhip God in his own Houſe, ſo whereſoever they are, they would do all they could to ſerve and honour him; *Whether they eat or drink, or whatſoever they do*, they would *do all to his Glory*. And as for their Fellow-ſervants, they would all love as Brethren, and every one ſeek another's Good as well as their own: *Whatſoever they would that men ſhould do to them*, they would *do the ſame to all* other Men. In ſhort, all would then deny *Ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent world*, and ſo walk Hand in Hand together in the

nar-

narrow way that leads to everlaſting life. This would be the happy State of all Mankind, if they were but well grounded in that Religion which the Eternal Son of God hath planted upon Earth.

But not to ſpeak of other People, we of this Nation rarely find any ſuch Effect of this Religion among our ſelves, though it be as generally profeſſed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any Nation, there are but few that are ever the better for it; the moſt being here alſo as bad both in their Principles, and Practices, as they which live in the darkeſt Corners of the Earth, where the Light of the Goſpel never yet ſhined: Tho' the Kingdom in general be Chriſtian, there are many Heathens in it, People that were never Chriſtened; many that were once Chriſtened, and are now turned Heathens again, living as *without God in the World*: Many that would ſtill be thought Chriſtians, and yet have apoſtatized ſo far as to lay aſide both the Sacraments which Chriſt ordained, and every thing elſe that can ſhew them to be ſo: Many that privily bring in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and ſo bring upon themſelves ſwift Deſtruction: Many that follow their pernicious Ways, by reaſon of whom the *way of truth is evil ſpoken of, and through covetouſneſs with feign-*

ed works, make merchandiſe of men, as St. *Peter* foretold, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *Many who will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts, heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears*; and ſo fulfil the Prophecy of St. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. And of thoſe who ſtill continue in the Communion of the Church, and in the outward Profeſſion of the true Chriſtian Faith, *There are many who although they profeſs to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Tit. 1. 16. Many, did I ſay? I wiſh I could not ſay almoſt all: But alas! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vaſt Company of People that are called Chriſtians in this Kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt? that finiſh the Work which God hath given them to do, even glorifie him in the World? How many that refuſe or neglect to worſhip and ſerve him upon his own Day? How few that do it upon any other Day, when they have any thing elſe to do? How many that never received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in their whole Lives? How few that receive it above two or three Times in the Year, how often ſoever they are invited to it? How many are the Proud, the Paſſionate, the Covetous, the Intemperate, the Incontinent, the Unjuſt, the Prophane and Im-

Impious, in compariſon of the Humble, and Meek, and Liberal, and Sober, and Modeſt, and Righteous, and Holy among us? The diſproportion is ſo vaſtly great, that none but God himſelf can make the Compariſon: So little of Chriſtianity is now to be found amongſt Chriſtians themſelves; to our ſhame be it ſpoken.

It is indeed a Matter of ſo much Shame as well as Grief, to all that have any regard for the Honour of Chriſt their Saviour, that they cannot but be very ſolicitous to know how it comes to paſs, that his Doctrine and Precepts are ſo generally ſlighted and neglected as they are in our Days? and how they may be obſerved better for the future than now they are? Both which Queſtions may be eaſily reſolved; for we cannot wonder, that of the many which profeſs the Chriſtian Religion, there are ſo few that live up to it, when we conſider how few are duly inſtructed in the firſt Principles of it.

The Religion which *Chriſt* hath revealed to the World, is by his Grace and Bleſſing ſettled and eſtabliſhed among us, ſo as to be made the Religion of the Kingdom in general: And therefore all that are Born in it, are, or ought to be, according to his Order or Inſtitution, ſoon after baptized, and ſo made his Diſciples, or Chriſtians by

Profeſſion. And the Church takes Security of thoſe who thus bring a Child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it ſhall be inſtructed in the Catechiſm, which ſhe for that Purpoſe hath ſet forth, containing all the Principles of that Religion into which it was baptized. But notwithſtanding this hath been neglected for many Years, whereby it is come to paſs that the far greateſt part of the People in this Kingdom, know little or nothing of the Religion they profeſs, but only to profeſs it as the Religion of the Country where they live; they may perhaps be very zealous for it, as all People are for the Religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their Lives according to it, becauſe they were never rightly informed about it; or, at leaſt, not ſoon enough, before Error or Sin hath got Poſſeſſion of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always *as children toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. 4. 14. And whatſoever Sin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal Bodies, ſo that they obey it in the Luſts thereof, in ſpight of all that

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can be ſaid to them out of God's own Word; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the Foundation is not firſt laid upon which they ſhould build up themſelves, in that moſt holy Faith that is preached to them. The Word they hear is as *Seed that falls by the way ſide*, or *upon a rock*, or elſe *among thorns*, and ſo never comes to perfection; their Hearts not being prepared before-hand, and rightly diſpoſed for it, by having the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt firſt infuſed into them.

This therefore being the great Cauſe of that ſhameful Decay of the Chriſtian Religion that is ſo viſible among us, we can never expect to ſee it repaired, unleſs the great Duty of Catechiſing be revived, and the Laws that are made about it, be ſtrictly obſerved all the Kingdom over; as moſt certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the Laws both of the Church and State, under which we live, but likewiſe for that they are grounded upon the Word of God himſelf, who expreſly commands the ſame thing by his Apoſtle, ſaying, *Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

For here, by *Nurture*, we are to underſtand, as the *Greek* Word παιδεία ſignifies,

that Diſcipline which Parents ought to exerciſe over their Children, to prevent their falling into, or continuing in any wicked courſe. And by the Admonition of the Lord, is meant the Catechiſing, or putting them in mind of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and of what he would have them believe and do, that they may be ſaved. For the Original Word νουθεσία, which we tranſlate *Admonition*, properly ſignifies *Catechiſing*. (Κατηχίζειν νουθετεῖν *Heſych.*) And therefore to Catechiſe or Inſtruct Children in the Knowledge of God and our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, is a Duty here laid upon all Parents by Almighty God himſelf; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their Children in the Admonition of the Lord, by catechiſing or teaching them the Principles of his Religion, they all live in the breach of a plain Law, a Law made by the ſupreme Law-giver of the World, and muſt accordingly anſwer for it at the laſt Day.

Wherefore all that are ſenſible of the great Account which they muſt give of all their Actions, at that time, to the Judge of the whole World, cannot but make as much Conſcience of this as of any Duty whatſoever, ſo as to uſe the utmoſt of their Care and Diligence, that their Children may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of

of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſo be *wiſe unto Salvation.* Neither is this any hard matter for thoſe to do, who live in the Communion of the Church, having ſuch a Catechiſm or Summary of the Chriſtian Religion drawn up to their Hands, which is eaſie both for Parents to teach, and for Children to learn: And yet ſo full and comprehenſive, that it contains all things neceſſary for any Man to know in order to his being ſaved. As you may clearly ſee if you do but caſt your Eye upon the Method and Contents of it; which may be all reduced to theſe five Heads, The *Baptiſmal Vow*, the *Apoſtles Creed*, the *Ten Commandments*, the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Doctrine* of the *Sacraments* ordained by our Lord *Chriſt*.

It begins where a Child begins to be a Chriſtian, and therefore hath a Chriſtian Name given him, even at his Baptiſm, *wherein he was made a Member of Chriſt, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*: Which great Privileges belong to all that are baptized, and to none elſe. None elſe being in the number of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples; for our Lord *Chriſt*, a little before his Aſcenſion into Heaven, left Orders with his Apoſtles, and in them with all that ſhould ſucceed in the Miniſtry of the Church to the End of the World, to make

make all Nations his Diſciples, by baptizing them *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, as the Original Words plainly import, *Mat.* 28. 19. And therefore as People of all Nations are capable of being made his Diſciples, ſo none now are nor ever can be made ſo any other way, than by being baptized according to his Order. But they who are not thus made his Diſciples by being *baptized unto him*, are not the Members of *Chriſt*; and if they be not the *Members of Chriſt*, they cannot be the *Children of God*, nor have any right to the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that being promiſed only to ſuch as *believe* and are *baptized*, *Mark* 16. 16. And our Saviour himſelf elſewhere alſo ſaith, *That except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John 3. 5. Whereby we may perceive the great Neceſſity of this Sacrament, where it may be had, as our Church obſerves in her Office for the Miniſtration of it, to ſuch as are of riper Years.

It is to be further obſerved, that when our Saviour ordained Baptiſm to be the Way or Means of admitting Perſons into his Church, or the Congregation of his Diſciples, leſt we ſhould think, as ſome have done, that he meant it only of thoſe who are of riper Years, he uſed the moſt general

ral Terms that could be invented, requiring that *all Nations* ſhould be baptized; and if *all Nations*, then Children alſo, which are a great, if not the greateſt part of every Nation. And accordingly his Church hath always baptized Children as well as adult Perſons: When any who were come to Years of Diſcretion, were willing and deſirous to become *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, that they might learn of him the Way to Heaven, they were made ſo by being baptized; and if they had Children, they were alſo baptized at the ſame time with their Parents: And ſo were the Children which were afterwards born to them; they alſo were baptized ſoon after they were born: And that it is our Saviour's Pleaſure that Children alſo ſhould be brought into his Church appears likewiſe in that when his Diſciples rebuked thoſe who brought Children to him, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of Heaven*, Mar. 10. 14.

But ſeeing they who are thus baptized according to the Inſtitution of *Chriſt*, are thereby made his Diſciples, and in him the *Children of God*, it is neceſſary they ſhould then promiſe to believe, and live from that time forward according as he hath commanded; which Promiſe therefore all that

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are grown up, always uſed to make every one in his own Perſon, and for that purpoſe were, and ought to be catechiſed before-hand, and put in mind of what they were to promiſe when they were baptized; and therefore were called *Catechumens.* But Children not being capable of making any ſuch Promiſe themſelves, in their own Perſons, they were always admitted, and required to do it by their Guardians, that is, by their Godfathers and Godmothers, which brought and offer'd them to be baptized; and are therefore obliged to take care that they be afterwards catechiſed, or inſtructed in the Principles of that Religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the Promiſe which they then made of framing their Lives according to it.

This Promiſe therefore which Children make at their Baptiſm by their Sureties, and which is implied in the very nature of the Sacrament, whether they have any Sureties or no, conſiſts of Three general Heads.

Firſt, *That they will renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh.*

Secondly, *That they will believe all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith.*

Thirdly, *That they will keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the days of their life.* Which

Which Three Things, under which the whole Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion is contained, being all promiſed by Children when they are baptized into it, it is abſolutely neceſſary that they be afterwards put in mind ſo ſoon as they are capable of the Promiſe which they then made, and of the Obligation which lies upon them to perform it: For otherwiſe it can never be expected, that they ſhould either do, or ſo much as know it; whereas the inſtructing them in this the firſt Part of the Catechiſm will prepare and diſpoſe them for the underſtanding all the reſt.

Particularly the Apoſtles Creed, which is next taught them, containing all thoſe Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, which they promiſed to believe, and nothing elſe; nothing but what is grounded upon plain Texts of Scripture, and hath been always believed by the whole Catholick Church, in all Ages and Places all the World over: Here are none of thoſe private Opinions and controverted Points which have ſo long diſturbed the Church, and ſerve only to perplex Mens Minds, and take them off from the more ſubſtantial and neceſſary Duties of Religion, as we have found by woful Experience, which our Church hath taken all poſſible care to prevent, by inſerting no other Articles of Faith into the Cate-

Catechiſm which her Members are to learn, than what are contained in this Creed, received and approved of by the whole Chriſtian World; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to *believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt*, in whoſe Name they were Chriſtened, and therefore muſt continue in this Faith, or ceaſe to be Chriſtians.

The other thing which they who are baptized promiſe; is, *That they will keep God's Commandments*, which therefore are next taught in the Catechiſm, without any mixture of Human Inventions or Conſtitutions: Thoſe Ten Commandments which the ſupream Law-giver himſelf proclaimed upon Mount *Sinai*, and afterwards wrote with his own Finger upon two Tables of Stone. Theſe they all are bound to learn, becauſe they are bound to keep them all, as they will anſwer it at the Laſt-day, when all Mankind ſhall be judged by them.

But no Man can keep theſe Commandments without God's ſpecial Grace, which we have no ground to expect, without praying to him for it. And therefore Children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that Form which *Chriſt* himſelf compoſed, and commanded us to ſay, whenſoever we pray, *Luke* 11. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apoſtles

ſtles Creed, believes all that he need believe; and he that keeps all the Ten Commandments, doth all that he need to do; ſo he that prays this Prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: So that in this ſhort Catechiſm, which Children of five Years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The laſt Part of the Catechiſm, is concerning the two Sacraments which *Chriſt* hath ordained in his Church, as *generally neceſſary to Salvation*; that is to ſay, *Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper*: Both which our Church hath there explain'd with ſuch extraordinary Prudence and Caution, as to take in all that is neceſſary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the Diſputes that have been raiſed about them, to the great Prejudice of the Chriſtian Religion.

Seeing therefore this Catechiſm is ſo full, that it contains all that any Man needs to know, and yet ſo ſhort, that a Child may learn it; I do not ſee how Parents can bring up their Children in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, better than by inſtructing them in it. I do not ſay, by teaching them only to ſay it by rote, but by inſtructing them in it, ſo that they may underſtand, as ſoon and as far as they are capable,

pable, the true Senſe and Meaning of all the Words and Phraſes in every Part of it; for which purpoſe it will be neceſſary to obſerve theſe Rules.

Firſt, You muſt begin betime, before your Children have got any ill Habits, which may be eaſily prevented, but are not ſo eaſily cured. When Children are baptized, being *born again of Water and of the Spirit*, as the Guilt of their Original Sin is waſhed away in *the laver of Regeneration*, ſo that it will never be imputed to them, unleſs it break forth afterwards into actual Tranſgreſſions; ſo they receive alſo the Spirit of God to prevent all ſuch Eruptions, by enabling them to reſiſt the *Temptations of the World, the Fleſh and the Devil*, to believe and ſerve God according as they then promiſed; ſo far at leaſt, that *ſin ſhall not have dominion over them, that they ſhould obey it in the luſts thereof, ſeeing now they are not under the law, but under the grace of Chriſt*, Rom. 6. 12–14. But that the Seeds of Grace which were then ſown in their Hearts, may not be loſt, or ſtifled, but grow up to perfection; great Care muſt be taken that they may be taught, ſo ſoon as they are capable to diſcern between Good and Evil, to avoid the Evil and do the Good, and to believe and live as they promiſed, when

when they were endued with Grace to do it. *Haſt thou Children?* ſaith the Son of *Sirach*, *Inſtruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth*, Eccleſ. 7. 23. Give thy Son no Liberty in his youth, and wink not at his Follies. *Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the ſides while he is a child, leſt he wax ſtubborn and be diſobedient unto thee, and ſo bring ſorrow to thine heart*, cap. 30. 11, 12. Whereas *he that gathereth Inſtruction from his youth, ſhall find Wiſdom till his old Age*, c. 6. 18. According to that of the Wiſe Man: *Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6. As *Timothy from a Child* had known the *holy Scriptures*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And that was the reaſon that he was ſo *expert* in them when he became a Man: Which therefore that your Children may alſo be, the firſt thing they learn, muſt be their Catechiſm, where they are taught all the great Truths and Duties that are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, as neceſſary to Salvation.

But how can ſuch Parents do this, that cannot read, nor ſay the Catechiſm themſelves? This, I fear, is the caſe of too many among us; There are many who having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or think ſcorn to learn it afterwards, and ſo loſe all the Benefit and

Comfort which they might receive by reading of the Holy Scriptures: But this, I confeſs, is not ſo neceſſary, eſpecially in our Church, where the Holy Scriptures are ſo conſtantly read in publick; that if People would as conſtantly come and hearken to them, they might be *wiſe unto Salvation*, altho' they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at leaſt in the Primitive times, when notwithſtanding they attained to the Knowledge of God, and of their Duty to him, as well as if they had been the greateſt Scholars in the World. But then conſidering that they could not read, they ſupplied that Defect by attending more diligently to what they heard out of God's Holy Word, and laying it up in their Hearts, ſo that they underſtood all the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and were able to inſtruct their Children in the ſame, as well as if they could read. But this is not our caſe; for now there are many who can neither read, nor ſo much as ſay the Catechiſm, having never learned it themſelves, and therefore cannot poſſibly teach it their Children. Such as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, who *when, for the time, they ought to be Teachers*, they *have need that one teach them again*, which be the firſt Principles of the *Oracles of God, and are become ſuch as have need of Milk, and not of ſtrong meat*,

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Heb. 5. 12. And what muſt ſuch do? They certainly, as they tender their own good, muſt be doubly diligent in the uſe of all means that may tend to their Edification and Inſtruction: And as they deſire the good of their Children, they muſt ſend them to School, or provide ſome other Perſon to teach them; which if the Parents neglect to do, the Godfathers and Godmothers of every Child ſhould put them in mind of it, and ſee that the Child be taught, ſo ſoon as he is able to learn, what a ſolemn Vow, Promiſe and Profeſſion he made by them at his Baptiſm. And that he may know theſe things the better, they muſt call upon him to hear Sermons; and chiefly they muſt provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar Tongue, and all other things which a Chriſtian ought to know and believe to his Soul's Health, as they are contained in the Church Catechiſm, and then to bring them to the Biſhop to be Confirmed by him.

But for that purpoſe, when Children have been taught the Catechiſm, they muſt be ſent to the Miniſter or Curate of the Pariſh where they live, that he may examine and inſtruct them in it: Examine whether they can ſay it, and inſtruct them ſo as to make them underſtand it. For tho'

the Words be all as plain as they can be well made, yet the things ſignified by thoſe Words, are many of them ſo high, that it cannot be expected that Children ſhould reach and apprehend them without help: Which therefore they muſt go to their Miniſter for, whoſe Duty and Office it is to acquaint them with the full Senſe and Meaning of every Word, what is ſignified by it, and what ground they have to believe it is God's Holy Word. But to do this to any purpoſe, requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our Days: And that is one great Reaſon there are ſo few among us that are *built up*, as they ought to be, *in their moſt holy Faith*. Many refuſe or neglect to ſend their Children to be Catechiſed at all; and they who ſend them, ſend them ſo little, and for ſo little a time, that it is morally impoſſible they ſhould be much the better for it: As many have found by Experience; who, altho' in their Childhood they were taught the Catechiſm, and could ſay it readily, yet having not been ſufficiently inſtructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than as if they had never learnt it. I wiſh this be not the Caſe of too many Parents: Wherefore that this great Work may be done effectually, ſo as to anſwer its End, as Children ſhould begin as ſoon as ever they

they are able to learn the Catechiſm, and ſo on by degrees till they can ſay it perfectly by heart, ſo when they can do that, they are ſtill to continue to be inſtructed in it all along, till they underſtand it all ſo well, as to be fit to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which uſually may be about Sixteen or Seventeen Years of Age, more or leſs, according to their ſeveral Capacities. By this means, as they grow in Years, they would *grow* alſo in *Grace*, and *in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. This likewiſe would be a great Encouragement to the Miniſter to take Pains with them, when they are ſuch as can underſtand what he ſaith to them, and will continue under his Care and Conduct 'till they are ſettled and grounded in the Faith, and have their Senſes exerciſed to diſcern between *Good and Evil*; and ſo ſhall be every way qualify'd to ſerve God, and do their Duty to him *in that ſtate of life, to which he ſhall be pleaſed* afterwards *to call them*, upon Earth, and then to go to Heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the Kingdom, that all Children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully inſtructed in the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, and of that Religion which he hath revealed to the World, till they are fit for the

Holy Communion, and ready to engage in the Affairs of the World, the next Generation would be much better than this, and Chriſtianity would then begin to flouriſh again, and appear in its native Beauty and Luſtre. And verily, whatſoever ſome may think, ſuch eſpecially as were never catechiſed themſelves, this is as great and neceſſary a Duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God himſelf by his Apoſtle, expreſly commands all Parents to bring up their Children in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*; that is, as I have ſhewed, to catechiſe or inſtruct them in the Principles of the Doctrine of our Lord *Chriſt*. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known Law, yea, of many Laws. There being many Places in God's Holy Word, where the ſame thing is commanded in other Terms by Almighty God himſelf, ſaying, *Theſe Words which I command thee this Day, ſhall be in thy Heart, and thou ſhalt teach them diligently thy Children*, Deut. 6. 7. And again, *Therefore ſhall ye lay up theſe Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a ſign upon your Hand, that they may be as Frontlets between your Eyes, and ye ſhall teach them your Children*, ch. 11. 18, 19. So alſo ch. 4. 10. This is that which he commands alſo by the wiſe

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Man, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6. The Word in the Original which we tranſlate, *train up*, ſignifies alſo to *dedicate* or *devote* a Child to the Service of God, by inſtructing him how to do it, and exerciſing him continually in it; and therefore in the Margin of our Bibles, it is tranſlated *Catechiſe* a Child: So that we have here both the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of this Duty: The Neceſſity, in that it is commanded to *train up*, or *catechiſe* a Child in the Ways of God: And the Uſefulneſs, in that what a Child is thus taught, will remain with him all his Life long.

Seeing therefore that God hath laid ſo ſtrict a Commandment upon all Parents, to bring up their Children in the Knowledge of himſelf, and of their Duty to him, they can expect no other, but that he ſhould take particular notice whether they do it or not; and reward or puniſh them accordingly. As we ſee in *Abraham*, what a ſpecial Kindneſs had God for him upon this Account? *Shall I hide from him*, ſaid the Lord, *that thing which I do? Seeing* that *Abraham ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth ſhall be bleſſed in him.* But why had he ſuch an extraordinary Favour for *Abraham* above all other Men? God

himſelf gives us the Reaſon of it, ſaying: *For I know that he will command his children and his houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. 18. 19. This was the Reaſon that *Abraham* was ſo much in his Favour, that he was called the *Friend of God*, Jam. 2. 23.

And how much God is diſpleaſed with Parents neglecting to bring up their Children in his true Faith and Fear, and ſuffering them to grow up and go on in a courſe of Vice and Prophaneneſs, appears ſufficiently from that ſevere Judgment which he inflicted upon *Eli* and his whole Houſe for it, ſaying to *Samuel*, *For I have told him*, even Eli, *that I will judge his houſe for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, becauſe his ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not. And therefore I have ſworn to the houſe of* Eli, *That the iniquity of* Eli's *houſe ſhall not be purged with ſacrifice nor offering for ever*, 1 Sam. 3. 13, 14. The Execution of which dreadful Judgment is left upon Record in the Holy Scriptures, as a ſtanding Monument and Caution to all Parents, to take heed how they Educate their Children.

Be ſure the Saints of God in all Ages have taken as much care to bring up their Children well, as to live well themſelves; making

making as much Conſcience of this, as of any Duty whatſoever which they owe to God: That the Children which he hath given them, may anſwer his End in giving them; that they may not be inſignificant Cyphers in the World, or as *fruitleſs trees* that ſerve only to *cumber the ground*, but that they may ſerve and glorifie God whilſt they are upon Earth, ſo as to be *meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the ſaints in light.*

And verily all Parents would make this their continual Care and Study, if they minded either their own or their Childrens good. Many complain, not without cauſe, that their Children are Diſobedient and Undutiful to them; but the Cauſe is chiefly in themſelves. When they have neglected their Duty to their Children, how can they expect their Children ſhould perform their Duty to them? They were never taught it, how then can they do it; If therefore they prove ſtubborn and obſtinate, if they give themſelves up to all manner of Vice and Wickedneſs, if inſtead of a Comfort they be a Grief and Trouble to their Parents, their Parents muſt blame themſelves for it: And when they come to reflect upon it, their Sin in neglecting their Duty to God and their Children in their Education, will be a

greater

greater Trouble to them, than any their Children can give them. Whereas when Parents bring up their Children in *the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, if their Children notwithſtanding happen to miſcarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their Duty, and have nothing to anſwer for upon that account.

But what a mighty Advantage would it be to the Children themſelves, to be thus continually put in Mind of their Baptiſmal Vow, the Articles of our Faith, the Duties of Religion, and what elſe is contained in the Catechiſm, from their Childhood all along 'till they come to be Men or Women? Their Minds would be then filled with ſuch Divine Truths, and with ſo great a ſenſe of their Duty, that there would be no room left for Hereſie or Sin to enter, at leaſt not ſo as to get poſſeſſion, and exerciſe any dominion there. The firſt Impreſſions that are made upon us, are not ſoon worn out, but uſually remain as long as we live. As the Wiſe Man obſerves, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6. When one hath been all along from his Childhood brought up in the Knowledge of God and his holy Will, it will ſtick by him ſo as to be a conſtant

ſtant Check upon him, to keep him within the compaſs of his Duty in all ordinary caſes; and if any thing extraordinary happen to draw him aſide, it will make him reſtleſs and uneaſie, 'till he hath recovered himſelf, and got into the right way again; and ſo it will either keep him Innocent, or make him Penitent. In ſhort, by the Bleſſing of God attending, as it uſually doth, this great Duty, when it is conſcienciouſly performed, is the beſt means that Parents can uſe, whereby to breed up their Children for Heaven, to make them Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God, both in this World, and for ever.

Wherefore, if we have any regard either to our own, or to our Childrens Eternal Welfare, let us ſet upon this Duty in good earneſt; let us bring up our Children ſo long in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, 'till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be ſaved: but we muſt be ſure to teach them by our Example as well as Inſtructions; we muſt not tell them one thing and do anotehr ourſelves; but ſhew them how to keep the Faith and Laws of God, by keeping them ourſelves before their Eyes, all the while we live together upon Earth: That when

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we are all got, one after another, out of this troubleſome and naughty World, we and our Children may at laſt meet together in Heaven, and there praiſe and glorifie Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for his Grace and Truth in *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord.

After this general Inſtruction in the Principles of our Holy Religion, it will be neceſſary, as ſoon as our young Chriſtian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the Nature of God, and the great Myſtery of the Trinity, into which we are all Baptiz'd; which therefore ſhall be my next Subject.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

UPON

The Knowledge of GOD.

THOUGH Religion in general be a thing that all Men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that Men differ ſo much about, as about the particular Acts and Exerciſe of it: For all Nations in the World have ſome Religion; but there is ſcarce two amongſt them all that have the ſame; yea, in one and the ſame Nation too, there are divers Modes of Religion profeſſed and practiſed. No Nation or Country in the World but will afford us Inſtances of this; and our own, I think, as many as any other whatſoever: For could we but caſt our Eyes into the ſeveral Corners of this Land, at this very Moment, what variety might we obſerve in theſe Acts which the ſeveral Parties amongſt us account to be Religi-

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ous! Some we ſhould ſee ſitting ſilently for a while together, without either ſpeaking, or hearing of a Word ſpoken, until at length up ſtarts a Man or a Woman, or ſome ſuch thing, and entertains them with a Diſcourſe made up of Cenſures and Malice, Blaſphemy and Nonſenſe; and this is all the Religion they pretend to. Others we ſhould find crowded together in ſeveral Corners, ſometimes praying, ſometimes diſcourſing, as it were, ſometimes arguing the Caſe with Almighty God, and acquainting him with what happens in the World, and that with as much Confidence and Malapertneſs, as if he was their Fellow-Creature, and then very gravely walk home and pleaſe themſelves with a vain conceit that they are more Religious than their Neighbours. Another ſort of People there are amongſt us, who are as Superſtitious as the former were ſlovenly and irreverent in their Devotions: For theſe having been ſprinkled with a little Holy Water, and performed their Obeiſance to a Crucifix or Picture, preſently fall a pattering over *Ave Maria's* and *Pater Noſters* to themſelves, as faſt as they can, whilſt the Prieſt, in the mean while, ſays ſomething too, but the People generally know not what it is, nor indeed what themſelves ſay, it being all in an unknown Tongue.

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And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a Perfect heart, & with a willing mind;——

Tongue. But howſoever, though they know not what they ſay, they think that God doth, and therefore ſatisfie themſelves, that they have ſaid ſomething, tho' they know not what, and think that God is well pleaſed with what they have done, becauſe themſelves are ſo.

Others there are, and by the Bleſſing of God, far more than all the reſt, in this Nation, who preſent themſelves before the great Creator and Poſſeſſor of the World, in that ſolemn and reverent manner as the Conſtitutions of our Church direct, humbly confeſſing their manifold Sins againſt God, begging Mercy and Pardon from him, imploring his Favour, and praiſing his Name for all the Expreſſions of his undeſerved Love to Mankind: And all this in our vulgar Tongue, that we all underſtand, and ſo perform a reaſonable Service unto God.

And, verily, if we conſider the Inſtitution it ſelf, of that religious Worſhip which we thus perform, it is certainly the beſt that ever was preſcribed by any Church, as being moſt conſonant to the general Rules of Devotion laid down in Scripture; as alſo moſt conformable to the Diſcipline and Practice of the Primitive Church. But we muſt not think that we ſerve God aright, becauſe we be preſent with them that do

ſo.

ſo. I do not doubt but that there are many amongſt us, who ſincerely endeavour to worſhip God, whenſoever they preſent themſelves before him in publick. I wiſh that all of us would do ſo. But we muſt ſtill remember, that we ſhould ſerve the Lord elſewhere as well as at Church, and on all other Days as well as upon the Lord's Day: And that if we would be truly Religious, our whole Man muſt be devoted to the Service of God, yea, and our whole Time too. We muſt not think that it is enough to do ſomething, but we muſt do all things that are required of us, which notwithſtanding we can never do, unleſs we know both that GOD whom we ought to ſerve, and that Service which we ought to perform unto him. And therefore *David* directs his Son to the right and only way to true Religion, ſaying, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *And thou Solomon my ſon, know thou the God of thy father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind:* Which Words, did we apply them to our ſelves, would, by the Bleſſing of God, put us upon ſincere Endeavours after real and univerſal Obedience to all the Commands of God: And perſwade us not to content our ſelves with vain Pretences to, and Profeſſions of Religion, as moſt do; but ſtrive to live up unto our Profeſſion, and carry

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and behave our ſelves ſo as becometh thoſe who deſire to be religious, and to ſerve God in good earneſt. Which that we may do, let us obſerve the Rule and Method which *David* here preſcribes to his Son: Firſt to *know God*, and then to *ſerve him* with a *perfect Heart* and a *willing Mind.*

I ſhall not trouble the Reader with any critical Diviſion of the Words, for they naturally divide themſelves into two Parts.

Firſt, That we ſhould *know*, and then that we ſhould *ſerve God with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind.*

I ſhall begin with the Firſt, not only becauſe it is firſt placed, but becauſe it neceſſarily muſt precede the Second; it being impoſſible for us to ſerve God aright unleſs we know him: For without this, all our Services will be but like the Altar which the *Athenians* Dedicated, Τῷ ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ, *To the unknown God.* By which Inſcription, they manifeſted to the World, that they knew that they ought to ſerve ſome God, but that they knew not that God whom they ought to ſerve. But that we may ſo know him as to ſerve him aright, I ſhall firſt ſhew what it is of God which we muſt know, in order to our ſerving him aright.

Firſt, Therefore he that would ſerve God aright, muſt *believe* and *know that he is*, Heb. 11. 6. that is, That there is ſuch a ſupreme and all-glorious Being in, and over the World that we call God, that made, preſerves, governs, and diſpoſes of every Thing in the World, as ſeemeth beſt to him: And that it is not only probable that there is ſuch a One, but that it is the moſt certain and neceſſary Truth in the World; without which, there would be no ſuch thing as Truth or Certainty. For indeed if God was not, nothing could be; He alone being the Baſis and Foundation of all Being in the World, yea, and of all *Motion* too, *Acts* 17. 28. And therefore *every thing that lives, every thing that moves*, nay, *every thing that is*, argues God to Be; which therefore is the firſt great Truth, upon which all the reſt depend; without which nothing would be True, much leſs wou'd our Services be ſo: So that the firſt thing to be done in order to our ſerving God, is to *know and believe that he is*, and that he ought to be ſerved and adored by us.

Secondly, It is neceſſary to know his Eſſence too, as well as his Exiſtence; what, as well as that he is; what he is in himſelf, and what he is to us; that in himſelf he *is what he is*, in and of himſelf, the Source of

of all Wiſdom, the Abyſs of all Power, the Ocean of all Goodneſs, the Fountain of all Happineſs, the Principle of all Motion, and the Center, yea, Perfection of all Perfections in the World; whoſe Nature or Eſſence is ſo Pure, ſo Glorious, ſo Immenſe, ſo Infinite, ſo Eternal, ſo every way Perfect, Tranſcendent and Incomprehenſible, that the more we think of him, the more we contemplate upon him, the more we praiſe and admire him, the more we may. And the higheſt Apprehenſions that we can have of him, is ſtill to apprehend him infinitely higher than all our Apprehenſions of him. And therefore that Man beſt knows God, that knows him to be beyond his Knowledge; and that knows he can never know him enough.

But we muſt know too what he is to us, even the Author and Giver of every good thing we have, and who in himſelf is whatſoever we can deſire to make us happy: And therefore it is that in the Covenant of Grace, when he would aſſure us that we ſhall have all things that we can enjoy, he only promiſes to be *our God*, Heb. 8. 10. which is as much as we can deſire, and indeed as himſelf can promiſe; for in promiſing himſelf, he hath promiſed whatſoever he is, whatſoever he hath, whatſoever he doth, nay, whatſo-

ever he can do as God. And thus are we to look upon God as the only Object of all true Happineſs, and the only Centre wherein all the Deſires and Inclinations of our Souls can reſt.

Thirdly, It is neceſſary alſo to know the ſeveral Attributes and Perfections which he hath revealed of himſelf in Scripture; that he is ſo Wiſe as to know whatſoever can be known; ſo Powerful as to do whatſoever can be done: So Great and Glorious in himſelf, that we have all juſt cauſe to fear him; ſo Kind and Gracious in his Son, that it is our Duty alſo to truſt in him; ſo True, that whatſoever he ſays is True becauſe he ſaith it; ſo Good, that whatſoever he doth is good becauſe he doth it; ſo Juſt as to puniſh every Sin that is committed, and yet ſo Merciful as to pardon every Sinner that repenteth; that he is Pure without Mixture, Infinite without Bounds, Eternal without Beginning, Everlaſting without End, and every way Perfect, without Compariſon.

Fourthly, We muſt know alſo the Works of God, what he hath done, wherein he hath manifeſted himſelf to us. But what hath God done? or rather, what hath he not done? It was he that raiſed this ſtately Fabrick of the World we live in, out of the Womb of Nothing. It was he that extracted Light out of Darkneſs,

Beauty

Beauty and Perfection out of a confuſed Chaos. It was he that bedecked the glorious Canopy of Heaven with thoſe gliſtering Spangles the Stars. It was he that commanded the Sun to run his Courſe by Day, and the Moon to ride her Circuit by Night about the World, to ſhew the Inhabitants thereof the Glory of their All-glorious Maker. It was he that hung the Earth upon Nothing, and ſpread upon the Surface of it a curious Carpet, embroidered with all manner, not of painted, but real Flowers, and Plants, and Trees. It was he that at firſt produced all Things out of Nothing; and it is he that ſtill preſerves all Things in their Being. It is he that orders the Affairs of Kingdoms, manageth the Intrigues of State, directeth the Events of Wars, and diſpoſes of every particular Perſon as himſelf ſees good. In a word, whatſoever was ever made in *Heaven above*, or *on Earth beneath*, it was he that made it; and whatſoever is ſtill done in *Heaven above*, or on *Earth beneath*, it is he that doth it, ſo that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by him, as the Firſt and Univerſal Cauſe of all Things.

Fifthly, It is neceſſary alſo to know ſo as to believe, that though there is but *One God*, yet there are *Three Perſons*; all and

every one of which is that *One God.* I do not ſay it is neceſſary to underſtand, or comprehend this Myſtery, for that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the leſs to believe it, becauſe we cannot underſtand it: For there are many other things in Divinity; yea, many things in Natural Philoſophy, and in Geometry it ſelf, which we cannot underſtand, and yet for all that, both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cauſe have we to believe this, which God himſelf hath aſſerted of himſelf! Nay, and beſides that, we have the ſame Obligations to ſerve and honour every Perſon, as we have to ſerve and honour any one Perſon in the Sacred Trinity, our Saviour himſelf having expreſly told us, *That all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, Joh. 5. 23. But that we cannot do, unleſs we believe the Son to be God as well as the Father; and, by conſequence, unleſs we acknowledge this Fundamental Article of our Chriſtian Faith, into which we were all baptized.

Secondly, We muſt conſider what kind of Knowledge we ought to have of God, in reference unto our ſerving him aright.

For we muſt not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that he is Wiſe and Powerful, Great

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and Glorious, True and Faithful, Good and Gracious; theſe things a Man may know in general, ſo as to be able to diſcourſe of them, and diſpute for them too, and yet come ſhort of that Knowledge which is requiſite to our true ſerving of God: Which ſhould be ſuch a Knowledge as will not only ſwim in the Brain, but ſink down into the Heart; whereby a Man is poſſeſſed with a due Senſe of thoſe things he knows, ſo that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be ſo. Thus *David*, who, in the Text, calls upon his Son to *know the God of his fathers*, intimates elſewhere, what Knowledge he means; ſaying, *Oh taſte and ſee that the Lord is good*, Pſal. 34. 8. Where we may obſerve, how he requires our Spiritual Senſes to be employ'd in our Knowledge of God, ſo as to ſee that he is good, yea, and taſte it too; that is, feel and experience it in our ſelves; which though it may ſeem a Paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real Truth, and attain unto it, if we be but careful and conſtant in our Meditations upon God, and ſincere in performing our Devotions to him, for, by theſe means, our Notions of God will be refined, our Conceptions cleared, and our Affections, by conſequence, ſo moved towards him, that we ſhall *taſte* and experience in our

ſelves, as well as know from others, that he is Good, and that all Perfections are concentred in him.

But this practical and experimental Knowledge of God, doth neceſſarily preſuppoſe the other, or the general Knowledge of him, ſo as to be acquainted with the ſeveral Expreſſions which God in Scripture hath made uſe of, whereby to reveal himſelf and his Perfections to us; as when he is pleaſed to call himſelf the *Almighty God*, the *All-wiſe*, and *Infinite*, the *Juſt* and *Gracious God*, and the like; or to ſay of himſelf, *I am that I am*; that is, in and of my ſelf Eternal. Unleſs we firſt know that theſe and ſuch like Expreſſions belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impoſſible for us to arrive at that Knowledge of him, which is neceſſary to our ſerving him aright.

And ſo I come to the laſt thing to be conſider'd here concerning the *Knowledge of God*, even that it is neceſſary to our ſerving him; ſo that none can ſerve him that does not firſt know him, and therefore that the Method as well as Matter of *David*'s Advice is here obſervable, *Know thou the God of thy fathers, and ſerve him*; or, firſt *know* him, and then *ſerve* him *with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind.*

And, verily, one would think that this is a Truth ſo clear, ſo evident of it ſelf,

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that it needs no Proof or Demonſtration; for how is it poſſible for us to know how to ſerve God, unleſs we firſt know that God whom we ought to ſerve? For all our Services unto God ſhould be both proper to his Nature, and ſuitable to his Perfection; and therefore unleſs I firſt know his Nature and Perfections, how can I adjuſt my Services to them? As for Example, I am to *fear* his Greatneſs and *truſt on his Mercy*, and *rejoyce* in his Goodneſs, and *deſire* his Favour: But how can I do this, unleſs I know that he is thus Great and Merciful, Good and Favourable.

Moreover, as a Man cannot ſerve God when he hath a Mind to do it, ſo neither will he have a Mind or Heart to ſerve him unleſs he firſt knows him. For the motions of the Will are always regulated by the ultimate Dictates of the practical Underſtanding, ſo that a Man chuſes or refuſes, loves or hates, deſires or abhors, according as he knows any Object that is preſented to him to be Good or Evil. And therefore how can I chuſe God as my chiefeſt Good, unleſs I firſt know him to be ſo; or love him as I ought, above all things, unleſs I firſt know him to be better than all things; or perform any true Service to him, unleſs I firſt know him to be ſuch a one, as deſerves to have true Service performed unto him? Nay,

Nay, *Laſtly*, Nothing that we do can be accepted as a Service to God, unleſs it be both grounded upon, and directed by a right *Knowledge* of him. God would not accept of blind Sacrifices under the Law; much leſs will he accept of blind Services now under the Goſpel, and therefore he expects and requires now, that whatſoever we do, either to or for him, be a λογικὴ λατρεία, *a reaſonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1. That our Souls as well as Bodies, yea, and the Rational as well as Senſitive Part be employ'd in all the Services which we perform to him; which certainly cannot be, unleſs we firſt know him; ſo that there is an indiſpenſable Connection betwixt our *knowing* and *ſerving* God; it being as impoſſible for any Man to ſerve him, that doth not firſt *know him*, as it is to *know him* aright, and not to ſerve him.

But however indiſpenſable this Connection be in its own nature, the Church of *Rome* can make a ſhift to diſpenſe with it; yea, ſo far as to aſſert, That *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion*. But you muſt excuſe them, for they do not mean by Devotion as we do, the real ſerving of God, but only the performing of ſome outward Services to him. And ſuch a kind of Devotion, I confeſs, Ignorance may be the Mother of: But a Man muſt be groſly ignorant

rant that thinks this to be Devotion, which is but a Piece of Pageantry, a mocking inſtead of ſerving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a diſmal, what a dreadful Account the Heads of that Church muſt hereafter give for daring to keep the People in ſo much Ignorance as they do; ſo as to render them uncapable of ſerving God, that ſo they may be the more ready to ſerve the Church; that is, the Intereſts and Deſigns of the Court of *Rome*.

But let them look to that; whilſt we, in the mean while, ſtudy to *know God* before all things elſe, conſidering,

Firſt, God therefore made us that we might *know him*, and that we might know that he made us. And therefore it is that he hath made rational Creatures capable of reflecting upon him that made us ſo: Neither did he only make us at firſt, but he ſtill preſerves us; we feed daily at his Table, and live upon his Bounty. And the very Beaſts, that any of us keep, know thoſe that keep them; and ſhall we be more brutiſh than Brutes themſelves, and not *know* him that keeps and maintains us? O how juſtly may God then call *Heaven and Earth to witneſs againſt us*, as he did once againſt his People *Iſrael*! Iſa. 1. 2, 3, 4.

Secondly,

Secondly, There is none of us but have attained to Knowledge in other things: Some of us have ſearched into Arts and Sciences, others are acquainted with ſeveral Languages; none of us but are, or would be expert in the Affairs of this World, and underſtand the Myſteries of our ſeveral Trades and Callings; what, and ſhall he alone, by whom we know other things, be himſelf unknown to us? What is, if this be not, a juſt Cauſe, wherefore God ſhould infatuate and deprive us of all our Knowledge in other things? ſeeing we labour more to know them, than him from whom we receive our Knowledge.

Thirdly, *Ignorance of God* is it ſelf one of the greateſt Sins that we can be guilty of, and which God is moſt angry for, *Hoſ.* 4. 4. And there God himſelf imputes the Deſtruction of his People, to the *want of Knowledge*, v. 6. Nay, and it is that Sin too that makes way for all the reſt. For what is the Reaſon that many ſo frequently Blaſpheme God's Name, ſlight his Service, tranſgreſs his Laws, and incenſe his Wrath againſt them, but meerly becauſe they do not know him, how Great, how Glorious, how Terrible a God he is? For did they but thus rightly know him, they could not but regard the Thoughts of doing any thing that is offenſive to him: And

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Therefore the true *Knowledge of God* would be the beſt Security and the moſt ſovereign Antidote in the World againſt the Infection of Sin, and the prevalency of Temptations over us; neither would it only preſerve us from Sin, but put us upon Duty and Service, and direct us alſo in the performance of it. Inſomuch that the hardeſt Duty will be eaſie to one that knows God; the eaſieſt will be hard to one that knows him not. Hard, did I ſay? Yea, and impoſſible too; for altho' a Man may know God, and yet not ſerve him, it is impoſſible that any Man ſhould ſerve God unleſs he knows him; *Knowledge* it ſelf being both the firſt Duty that we owe to God, and the Foundation of all the reſt.

And therefore, to conclude, if any deſire to perform the Vow they made in their Baptiſm, to *love and fear*, to *honour and obey* the *Eternal God* that made them; If any deſire to be *Chriſtians indeed*, and *holy in all manner of Converſation*; If any deſire to *truſt on the Promiſes*, and obſerve the *Precepts* of the Great Creator and Poſſeſſor of the World, to live above the *Snares of Death*, and to antedate the *Joys of Heaven*; If any deſire to *live the Life*, and to *die the Death of the Righteous*, to ſerve God here, ſo as to enjoy him hereafter; Let all ſuch but ſtudy the Scriptures,

tures, and frequent the publick Ordinances; be conſtant and ſincere in Prayer and Meditation, neglecting no Opportunity of acquainting themſelves with God, but make uſe of all means poſſible, to get their Hearts poſſeſſed with a reverential Apprehenſion of God's Greatneſs and Glory, and with a due ſenſe of his Goodneſs and Perfections, and their Work will ſoon be done; for if they thus know God, they will ſerve him too with a *perfect Heart, and a willing Mind.*

We have ſeen how we ought to know God; we are now to conſider how we ought to ſerve him; without which, indeed, our *Knowledge* of him will avail us nothing. For, as the Apoſtle argues, *though I ſpeak with tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal,* 1 Cor. 13. 12. So here: Tho' we ſhould have the higheſt Notions and Speculations in Divinity, that Men or Angels ever had; tho' we ſhould underſtand the higheſt Myſteries in Religion, and dive into the profoundeſt Secrets of Chriſtian Philoſophy; though we ſhould excell the greateſt School-Men, and the moſt learned Doctors that ever lived; and were able to baffle Hereſies, diſpute Error and Schiſm out of the Chriſtian Church, and evince the Truth of the Articles

ticles of our Faith, by more than Mathematical Demonſtrations; Yet, if after all this, our *Knowledge* be only Notional, not moving our Affections, nor putting us upon the Practice of what we know, *it is but as ſounding Braſs, and a tinkling Cymbal*: it may make a noiſe in the World, and get us Applauſe amongſt Men, but it will ſtand us in no ſtead at all before the *Eternal God*; yea, it will riſe up in judgment againſt us another Day, and ſink us lower into the Abyſs of Torments. And therefore, tho' Men may, God doth not look upon this as the true *Knowledge* of himſelf. Neither can any one be properly ſaid to know God that doth not ſerve him with a *perfect Heart*, and a *willing Mind*. And therefore having diſcourſed of that *Knowledge* which is neceſſary to our ſerving God, I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew, how we ought to ſerve God according to our *Knowledge*.

In ſpeaking unto which, I muſt beg the Reader's moſt ſerious and Chriſtian Attention, as to a Matter which concerns our Lives; yea, our Eternal Lives in another World: I hope there is none of thoſe that pretends to Inſtruct, ſo Brutiſh and Atheiſtical, as not to deſire to ſerve God: None ſo Proud and Self-conceited, as to think that they ſerve him well enough already,

or

or at leaſt know how to do it. I write only to ſuch as deſire to be inſtructed, read Books of practical Religion with no other Deſign but to ſerve God, and to learn how to ſerve him better. And if this be our only Deſign, as I hope it is, let us manifeſt it to the World, and to our Conſciences, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon our own Hearts. For I may venture to ſay, that this is the nobleſt and moſt neceſſary Subject that I can write, or any one can read of; and that which, if ſeriouſly weighed, rightly conſidered, and truly practiſed, will moſt certainly bring us to the higheſt Happineſs which our Natures are capable of, or our Perſons were at firſt deſigned for.

Now, for our clearer proceeding in a Matter of ſo great Importance, we will firſt conſider, what it is to ſerve God? A Queſtion very neceſſary to be treated of and reſolved, becauſe of the general Miſtakes that are in the World about it: Many People fancying the Service of God to conſiſt in ſome few particular Acts: as in ſaying their Prayers, reading the Scriptures, going to Church, and giving an Alms now and then to the Poor, eſpecially if they be but zealous and reſolute in the Defence of the Party or Faction they are of, ſo as to promote it to the higheſt of their Parts, Eſtates,

ſtates, or Power, then they think they do God good ſervice, and that this is all he requires of them. Others think they ſerve God by ſerving of his Creatures, as in praying to Saints, bowing to Images, and falling down before the Euchariſt, when it is carried in Proceſſion: Nay, many there are, who think they ſerve God when they diſhonour him, wreſting his Scriptures, corrupting his Doctrines, oppoſing his Vicegerents, ſeducing his People and Servants into Error, and all for the promoting of ſome Temporal Intereſts, or groundleſs Opinions. But we might know that the Service of God is a Thing of an higher Nature, and nobler Stamp than ſuch ſilly Mortals would perſwade us it is: Conſiſting in nothing leſs than,

1. In devoting of our ſelves, and all we have, or are, or do unto the Honour of the Eternal God; reſigning our Hearts wholly to him, and ſubduing all our Paſſions and Affections before him. For ſeeing we were wholly made by him, and wholly depend upon him, if we would ſerve God at all, we muſt ſerve him with all we are; every Faculty of our Souls, and Members of our Bodies employing themſelves in thoſe Services which he hath ſet them, ſo as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's; his by Creation, it was he

that made us; his by Preſervation, it is he that maintains us; and his by *Redemption*, it is he that hath purchaſed us with his own moſt *precious Blood*; and therefore being thus bought with *a price*, we ſhould *glorifie God both in our Souls and Bodies which are his*, 1 Cor. 6. 20.

And as we are to ſerve him with all we are, ſo alſo with all we have. *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, and with the firſt fruits of all thine increaſe*, Prov. 3. 9. Whatſoever we have we receive from his Bounty, and therefore whatſoever we have we ſhould employ for his Glory: Our Parts, our Gifts, our Eſtates, our Power, our Time; whatſoever we can call ours, is his in our Hands, and therefore to be improved, not for our ſelves but him; as our Saviour ſhews in the Parable of the Talents which the Maſter of the Houſe diſtributed amongſt his Servants, *to ſome he gave one, to ſome five, to others ten*, that every one might employ his Proportion to his *Maſter's uſe*, neither *ſquandering it away*, nor yet *laying it up in a napkin*. It is God that is the grand Maſter and Poſſeſſor of the World, who parcels it out amongſt his Creatures, as himſelf ſees good; but whereſoever he entruſteth any thing, he expects the improvement of it for himſelf. And ſo, I ſuppoſe, doth every one of us from

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ſuch Servants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their Hands, be laid out, not for themſelves, but for us; and that they ſpend their Time in our Service, not their own: And if they do otherwiſe, none of us but will ſay, they do not ſerve us, but themſelves. How then can we expect that God ſhould look upon us, as ſerving him, when we do not do ſo much for him as we expect from our own Servants, though our Fellow-Creatures? Or how can we think that we ſerve him as we ought, unleſs we ſerve him as much as we can? Or that God ſhould look upon us as his Servants, unleſs we employ and improve whatſoever we have, not for our own Pleaſure, Profit or Applauſe, but for his Honour and Glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's Words, Mat. 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in heaven.*

2. Hence the ſerving of God conſiſteth alſo in the performing of ſincere and univerſal Obedience to all his Laws and Commands, which is but the natural conſequent of the former: For if our *whole Man*, both Soul and Body, and whatſoever we have, or are, ought to be devoted to his Glory; it muſt needs follow, that

whatſoever we do, ſhould be conformable to his Precepts; which alſo is no more than every one of us expects from our Servants: For thoſe whom we have covenanted with to be our Servants, and whom we keep upon that very account, that they may ſerve us; we all expect that they ſhould obſerve all our Commands, and do whatſoever in Juſtice, and by our Covenants, we can enjoyn them. But how much more then muſt we ourſelves be obliged to obey all the Laws and Precepts of him that made us, whoſe Creatures we are, and whoſe Servants, by conſequence, we ought to be.

I ſay, all his Laws and Precepts; for we muſt not think to pick and chuſe, to do ſome things, and leave other things undone: For we ſhould take it ill if our Servants ſhould ſerve us ſo; if when we ſend them upon ſeveral Buſineſſes, they ſhould mind only one of them, and neglect all the other, we ſhould queſtionleſs look upon them as very idle and careleſs Servants: But let us conſider and bethink ourſelves, whether we have not ſerved our Maſter, the Eternal God, as bad as our Servants have or can ſerve us. He hath given us ſeveral Laws to obſerve, and hath ſet us ſeveral Works to do, and we, perhaps, can make a ſhift to do ſomething that is required of

us;

us; but never think of the other, and perhaps, the principal things too that he expects from us,

Juſt as if when *Moſes* had broke the two Tables of Stone, whereon the Ten Commandments were written, one Man ſhould have come and ſnatched away one piece, a ſecond ran away with another piece, and a third with another, till at length ten ſeveral Perſons had gotten ten ſeveral Pieces, wherein the Ten Commandments were ſeverally written; and when they had done ſo, every one of them ſhould have ſtriven to keep the Law that was written in his own Piece, never minding what was written in the others. Do you think that ſuch Perſons as theſe are, could be reputed the Servants of God, and to obſerve his Laws, when they minded only one particular Branch or Piece of them? The Caſe is our own; we hearing of ſeveral Laws and Commands which the moſt high God hath ſet us, get ſome one of them by the end, and run away with that, as if we were not concerned in any of the reſt. But let us ſtill remember, that the ſame Finger that wrote one of the Commands, wrote all the other too. And therefore he that doth not obſerve all, as well as one, cannot properly be ſaid to obſerve any at all. Neither indeed doth he ſerve God in any thing: For

though he may do ſomething that God requires, yet it is plain, that he doth not therefore do it, becauſe God requires it; for if he did ſo, he would do all things elſe too that God requires. And therefore ſuch a Perſon doth not ſerve God at all in what he doth; no, he ſerves himſelf rather than God, in that he doth it not in obedience to God, but with reſpect unto himſelf; as to get himſelf a Name and Credit amongſt Men, or perhaps to ſatisfie his troubleſome Conſcience, which would not let him be at quiet unleſs he did it.

But now one that would ſerve God indeed, hath *reſpect to all his commandments*, Pſal. 119. 6. *and walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*, as *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* are ſaid to have done, *Luke* 1. 6. And thus, Whoſoever would ſerve the Lord in any thing, muſt ſerve him in all things that he requireth. And this is that which *David* means in this Advice to his Son, ſaying, *Know thou the God of thy fathers, and ſerve him*; that is, obſerve and do whatſoever he enjoyns, and that too *with a perfect heart and a willing mind*.

And ſo I come to the *Second* thing to be conſider'd here; that is, The manner how we ought to ſerve God, *even with a perfect heart and with a willing mind*.

Firſt, with a perfect heart: That is, With Integrity and Sincerity of Heart, not

from any By-ends, or ſiniſter Deſigns, but out of pure Obedience to the Laws of God, as he is the Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, and, in *Chriſt, our Lord and our God.* A thing much to be obſerved in all our Services, without which, indeed, they are no Services at all. Inſomuch, that ſhould we pray our Tongues to the Stumps, and faſt our Bodies into Skeletons; ſhould we fill the Air with Sighs, and the Sea with Tears for Sin; ſhould we ſpend all our Time in hearing of Sermons, and our whole Eſtates in relieving the Poor; ſhould we hazard our Lives, yea, give our Bodies to be burnt for our Religion, yet nothing of all this would be accepted as a Service unto God, unleſs it be performed out of ſincere Obedience to his Laws, and with *a ſingle Eye*, aiming at nothing but his Glory, which ought to be the ultimate *End of all our Actions*, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

Secondly, We muſt not only ſerve God *with a perfect Heart*, but *with a willing Mind* too, בְּנֶפֶשׁ חֲפֵצָה properly with a willing Soul; that is, our *Will*, and all the Affections of our *Souls* ſhould be carried after, and exerciſed in the Service of Almighty God. Our Deſires are to be enflamed towards it, our Love fixed upon it, and our Delight placed in it. Thus the *Iſraelites* are ſaid to have *ſought the Lord with their whole deſire*, 2 Chron. 15. 15.

And we are commanded to *love the Lord our God*, and ſo to *ſerve him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul*, Deut. 11. 13. Yea, we are to *delight to do the will of God*, Pſal. 40. 8. as our Saviour did, ſaying, *It is my meat to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*, Joh. 4. 34. Thus are we too to eſteem the Service of God above our neceſſary Food, pleaſing our ſelves in pleaſing him, and ſo make his Service not only our Buſineſs, but our Recreation too; and whoſoever doth not ſo, whatſoever he doth for God, he cannot be ſaid to ſerve him, becauſe he doth it againſt his Will, and againſt the Bent and Inclination of his Soul. And therefore, though, as to the outward Act, he may do that which God commands, yet inwardly he doth it not; becauſe his Soul is ſtill averſe from it, by which means it ceaſeth to be the *Service of God*; becauſe it is not performed by the *Whole Man*, even *Soul and Body*, both which are neceſſarily required in our Performance of real Service to him that made them both.

Thirdly, What is the Reaſon why we ought to ſerve God ſo? Becauſe *he ſearcheth the Hearts, and underſtandeth all the Imagination of the Thoughts*: that is, He is throughly acquainted with every Thought in our Hearts, and with every Motion and Inclination of our Souls, infinitely better

ter than our ſelves are. And therefore it is in vain for us to think to put him off with *outward* and *formal*, inſtead of *inward* and *real Service*. For he doth not only ſee what we do, but knows too what we think, while we are doing of it; and doth not only obſerve the Matter of our Actions, but the manner alſo of our performing them. It being his great Prerogative to *ſearch the heart*, and to *try the reins*, *and to have all things naked and open unto him*, Heb. 4. 13. So that he ſees what the Soul doth within doors, in the ſecret Cloſets of the Heart, as clearly as what it doth without in the open Streets of the World; every Affection of the Soul being as manifeſt unto him, as the Actions of the Body are: And therefore *Hypocriſie* is the moſt fooliſh and ridiculous Sin imaginable, making as if we could Cheat and Deceive God, and hide our Sins from the All-ſeeing Eyes of Omniſcience itſelf, or make God believe that we are Holy, becauſe we appear to be ſo to Men.

But to bring this home more cloſely to our ſelves. We have been all at Church, perhaps, performing our Service and Devotions to him that made us; it is true, as to our outward Appearance, there hath been no great difference betwixt us, we have been equally preſent at theſe Publick Or-

Ordinances, and we do not know but one hath prayed and heard the Word of God both read and preached as well as another; ſo that ſeemingly our Services are all alike as to us; but are they ſo to God too? that I much queſtion: For he hath taken eſpecial notice all along, not only of the outward Geſtures of our Bodies, but likewiſe of the inward Behaviour of our Hearts and Souls before him: And therefore, as I hope he hath ſeen many of us ſerving him with a *perfect heart, and willing mind*; ſo, I fear, he hath found too many of us tardy, *coming before him as his people come, and ſitting before him as his people ſit*, while our Hearts in the mean time have been about our Covetouſneſs; and hath plainly ſeen, though our Bodies have been at Church, our Souls have been elſewhere, thinking upon our Relations, or Eſtates, or ſomething or other, beſides what our Thoughts ſhould have been employ'd about in ſo ſolemn a Duty as the Publick Worſhip. *But* know *this, Oh vain man, whoſoever thou art, that God will not be mocked:* And though thou haſt not ſeen, or perhaps ſo much as thought of him, he hath ſeen thee and thy Thoughts too; yea, at this very Moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou anſwer him, the great Judge of the whole World, when

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he ſhall tell thee to thy Face, and call his Omniſcience to witneſs, That he ſaw thee at this, as at other times, play the Hypocrite with him, making as if thou ſervedſt him, when thou ſervedſt him not; and inſtead of ſerving him *with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind*, ſervedſt him neither in *Heart* nor *Mind*. Let us all remember this when we approach God's Houſe, and alſo bethink our ſelves afterwards whether we have not been guilty of this Sin! if we have, we may be ſure God knows it, and we ſhall hear of it another Day. But to prevent what juſtly may be our Doom, let us repent of our former Neglects in this kind; and, for the future, whenſoever we are ſerving God, let us ſtill look upon him as looking upon us, and fix in our Hearts this one thing, *That God knows all things in the World.* And therefore let us not think to put God off with ſuch careleſs and perfunctory Services as heretofore too many of us have done; but if we deſire to ſerve him at all, let us ſerve him *with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind.*

Thus I have endeavoured to ſhew both what it is to *ſerve God*, and how we ought to do it: Now let us not think it ſufficient that we know how to ſerve God, unleſs we ſerve him according to our Knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour's Words:

If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if you do them, John 13. 17. Which Happineſs, that all who read this, may attain unto, let me adviſe them, *in the name of the eternal God that made them*, to *renounce* and *forſake* their former Maſters, Sin, Satan and the World, whoever may have hitherto been inſlaved to them, and now dedicate themſelves wholly to the Service of him, that made them for that very purpoſe, that they might ſerve him; yea, and who hath compoſed our Natures ſo, that the higheſt Happineſs that we are capable of, conſiſts in our ſerving him: And therefore let us not think that he calls upon us to ſerve him, becauſe he wants our Service; no, be it known unto all, that he is *infinitely happy* in the enjoyment of his own Perfection, and needs not the Services of ſuch poor ſilly Mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from him: And therefore he doth not call upon us to ſerve him, becauſe he cannot be happy without us, but becauſe we cannot be happy without him: Not becauſe he wants our Service, but becauſe we want it; it being impoſſible for us to be Happy, unleſs we be Holy; or to enjoy God, unleſs we ſerve him.

Wherefore all ye that deſire to go to Heaven, to have him that made you reconciled

conciled unto you, and ſmile upon you; or that deſire to be really and truly Happy, ſet upon the Work which God ſent you into the World about, put it not off any longer, make no more vain Excuſes, but from this Day forward, let the Service of God be your daily, your continual Employment and Pleaſure: Study and contrive each Day how to advance his Glory and Intereſt in the World, and how you may walk more ſtrictly, more circumſpectly, more conformably to his Laws than ever. But whatſoever Service you perform unto him, be ſure to do it *with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind.* Think not to put him off with Fancy inſtead of Faith, or with outward Performances inſtead of real Duties: But remember that *he ſearcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the ſons of men,* and obſerves the inward Motions of the Soul, as well as the outward Actions of the Life: And therefore whereſoever you are, whatſoever you do, ſtill bethink your ſelves, that he that made you, ſtill looks upon you; taking notice, not only of the matter of the Action which you do perform, but alſo of the manner of your performing them; and therefore be ſure to have a ſpecial Care in all your Services for, or unto God, that your *hearts be ſincere before him, and your minds*

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inclined to him, that ſo you may *ſerve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.*

But to conclude, Whoever ye are that read this Diſcourſe, I have here ſhewn you the *things that belong unto your everlaſting peace*, having acquainted you with the Method and Manner of your *ſerving God* in Time, in order to your Enjoyment of him to Eternity; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be reſolved to practiſe it, yea, or no, 'tis only the Eternal God that knows. But this I know, that if you will not be perſwaded to *ſerve God*, yea, and to ſerve him too *with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind*, you will one Day wiſh you had, but then it will be too late. And therefore if you will put it to the venture, go on ſtill, and with the unprofitable Servant, *hide your Talents in a Napkin*, or laviſh them out in the Revels of Sin and Vanity; let thy *Belly* be ſtill *thy God*, and the *World* thy *Lord*; ſerve thy Self or Satan, inſtead of the *living God: But know that for all this, God will bring thee into judgment*; after which, expect nothing elſe but to be overwhelmed with Horror and Confuſion to Eternity.

Whereas on the other ſide, ſuch amongſt you as ſhall ſincerely endeavour from hence-

forth

forth to ſerve God *with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind*, I dare, I do aſſure them, in the Name of God, *their labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord:* For God ſuffers not his Enemies to go unpuniſh'd, nor his Servants unrewarded.

And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the Service of ſo Great and ſo Good a Maſter, and devote your ſelves wholly to his Service, and employ *your Talents* faithfully for his Glory. Remember the time is but ſhort; and *Chriſt* himſelf will receive you into Eternal Glory, ſaying, *Well done, good and faithful Servants.*

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

UPON

The Myſtery of the Trinity.

THough there be many in the World that ſeem to be Religious, there are but few that are ſo: One great Reaſon whereof is, becauſe there are ſo many Miſtakes about Religion, that it is an hard matter to hit upon the true Notion of it: And therefore deſiring nothing in this World, ſo much as to be an Inſtrument in God's Hand to direct Men unto true Religion, my great Care muſt, and, by the Bleſſing of God, ſhall be, to inſtil into them right Conceptions of Him, that is the only Object of all Religious Acts, without which, it is impoſſible to continue, or indeed to be Religious. The true Natute and Notion of Religion conſiſting in

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the right Carriage and Deportment of our *whole Man*, both Soul and Body, towards him that made us; whom therefore, unleſs we truly know, we can never be truly Religious; and therefore they that begin their Religion with Zeal and Paſſion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they ſhould end: our Zeal for God, and Love unto him, being the higheſt Acts of Religion, and therefore cannot be the firſt: But they neceſſarily preſuppoſe the *true Knowledge of God*, without which our Zeal will be blind, and our Love both groundleſs and tranſient.

But as it is impoſſible to be truly Religious, unleſs we *know God*, ſo is it very difficult ſo to know him, as to become truly Religious. It is true that there is ſuch a Supream Being in and over the World, as we call God; the very Light of Nature teaches, and Reaſon it ſelf demonſtrates it to be moſt certain and undeniable. But what he is, and what Apprehenſions we ought to have of this glorious Being, none but himſelf is able to deſcribe and manifeſt unto us, ſo that our Conceptions of him are ſtill to be regulated by the Diſcoveries that he hath made of himſelf to us; without which, tho' we may have ſome confuſed Notions of him, yet we can never ſo know him, as to ſerve him faithful-

ly, and, by conſequence, be truly Religious.

Hence therefore if we would know God, we muſt ſearch the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, wherein God hath been pleaſed moſt clearly to manifeſt and diſcover himſelf unto us: I ſay, both the Old and New Teſtament; for otherwiſe, our *Knowledge of God* may be very Defective and Erroneous, there being ſeveral things which God, in the New Teſtament, hath moſt plainly revealed of himſelf, which in the Old Teſtament are more darkly and obſcurely delivered to us. As for Example, The great *Myſtery of the Trinity*; tho' it be frequently intimated in the Old Teſtament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to underſtand it without the New: Inſomuch, that the *Jews*, tho' they have had the Law above three Thouſand, and the Prophets above two Thouſand Years amongſt them, yet, to this Day, they could never yet make this an Article of Faith; but they, as well as the *Mahometans*, ſtill aſſert, *That God is only one in Perſon as well as Nature:* Whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Teſtament, than that there *is but One God*, and yet *there are Three Perſons*, every one of which is that *One God*: And ſo that tho' God be but *One* in Nature, yet he is *Three* in *Perſons*; and

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ſo *Three Perſons*, as yet to be but *One* in Nature.

And, verily, altho' there was no other Text in all the Scripture, whereon to ground this Fundamental Article of our Chriſtian Faith; that of *Matt.* 28. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, is a ſufficient Foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, neceſſary to be believed concerning the *glorious Trinity*, but what may eaſily and naturally be deduced from theſe Words, which were ſpoken, it is true, by our Saviour before his Aſcenſion, but I queſtion whether they were throughly underſtood, till after the *Holy Ghoſt* was come down to Earth. It being only by God himſelf that we can come to the true *Knowledge* of him, much leſs are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe *Three Perſons* in the Godhead, without the aſſiſtance of one of them, that is, of the *Holy Ghoſt*; by whom the other two are wont to work; he being the Iſſue, as I may ſo ſay, and Breath of both. Hence it is, that the Wiſdom of the Church, for theſe many Centuries, hath thought fit to Order, That this great Myſtery be celebrated the next Lord's Day after the Commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming

down upon the Diſciples, and in them, upon all true Believers; both becauſe all *Three Perſons* have now manifeſted themſelves to Mankind; the *Father* in his Creation of them, the *Son* in his Converſing with them, and the *Holy Ghoſt* by his coming down upon them: And alſo to ſhew, that it is only by the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit, that we can rightly believe in this Glorious and Incomprehenſible Myſtery, which our Saviour hath ſo clearly revealed to us in theſe Words, *Go ye, and teach all nations*, &c.

For the opening of which, we muſt know that our Saviour in the foregoing Verſe, acquaints his Diſciples, that now *all Power* was given him *in Heaven and in Earth*; by vertue whereof, he here iſſueth forth his Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, and, in them, to all that ſhould ſucceed them, to ſupply his room, and be his Vicegerents upon Earth, he being now to reſide in his Kingdom of Heaven. *For*, ſaith he, *All Power is given to me in heaven and earth; Go ye therefore and teach all nations*: As he alſo ſaith elſewhere to them, *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you*, John 20. 21. as if he ſhould have ſaid, My Father having committed to me all Power and Authority both in Heaven and Earth, I therefore authorize and commiſſionate,

yea,

And lo! a voice from Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Mat. 3. 17.

P. La Vergne inv. M. Ier Guch.

yea, and command you to go and teach all Nations, &c.

This therefore is part of the Commiſſion which our Lord and Maſter left with his Apoſtles immediately before he parted from them. Thoſe being the laſt words which St. *Matthew* records him to have ſpoken upon Earth; and therefore they muſt needs contain matter of very great Importance to his Church; and it muſt needs highly concern us all to underſtand the true Meaning and Purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method and Order as he did in ſpeaking them.

Firſt, Therefore, here is the Work he ſends the Apoſtles about; *Go ye therefore and teach*; Πορευθέντες ϑν μαθητεύσατε, which more properly may be rendred, *Go ye therefore and diſciple all Nations*, or, *make the Perſons of all Nations to be my Diſciples*, that is, *Chriſtians*. That this is the true Meaning of the words, is plain and clear, from the right notion of the word here uſed, μαθητεύω, which coming from μαθητὴς, a *Diſciple*, it always ſignifieth either to be, or to make Diſciples, whereſoever it occurs in all the Scriptures, as μεθητευθεὶς, *Matt.* 13. 52 which is *Inſtructed*, ſay we, the *Syriack* better,

ter, ܐܬܬܠܡܕ that is, *made a Disciple*, a תלמיד that is, not only a *Scholar* or *Learner*, but a *Follower* or *Professor* of the Gospel, here called the *Kingdom of Heaven*. Another place where this Word occurs is, *Matth.* 27. 57. ἐμαθήτευσε τῷ Ἰησοῦ where we rightly translate it, *was Jesus Disciple*. Another place is, *Acts* 14. 21. καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς, which we improperly render, *having taught many*, the *Syriack* and *Arabick*, more properly, *having made many Disciples*. And these are all the places in the New Testament where this Word is used, except those I am now considering, where all the *Eastern* Languages render it according to its notation, *Disciple*. The *Persian* paraphrastically expounds it, *Go ye and reduce all Nations to my Faith and Religion*. So that whosoever pleads for any other Meaning of these words, do but betray their own Ignorance in the Original Languages, and, by consequence, in the true Interpretation of Scripture.

I should not have insisted so long upon this, but that the false Exposition of these words hath occasioned that no less dangerous than numerous Sect of *Anabaptists* in the World; for the old *Latin* Translation, having it, *Euntes ergo docete omnes Gentes*; hence the *German*, where Ana-

baptism

baptiſm firſt began; and all the modern Tranſlations render it as we do, *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them.* From whence it was ſuppoſed by ſome that were not able to dive into the true Meaning of the Words, that our Saviour here commanded, that none ſhould be baptized, but ſuch as were firſt taught the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, which is the greateſt Miſtake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not ſpeak one word of Teaching before Baptiſm, but only after, *ver.* 20. διδάσκοντες, his Meaning being only that his Apoſtles ſhould go about the World, and perſwade all Nations to forſake their former Idolatries and Superſtitions, and to turn Chriſtians, or the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt; and ſuch as were ſo ſhould be baptized. And therefore Infant-Baptiſm is ſo far from being forbidden, that it is expreſly commanded in theſe words; for all Diſciples are here commanded to be baptized; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptized, becauſe Diſciples. And ſeeing all Diſciples are to be baptized, ſo are Infants too, the Children of Believing Parents, for they are Diſciples as well as any other, or as well as their Parents themſelves: For all that are in Covenant with God muſt needs be Diſciples: But that Children were always eſteemed

in Covenant with God, is plain in that God himſelf commanded the Covenant ſhould be ſealed to them, as it was all along by Circumciſion. But that Children are Diſciples as well as others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, ſaying of Children, *of ſuch is the Kingdom of God*, Mark 10. 14. And therefore they muſt needs be Diſciples, unleſs ſuch as are not Diſciples can belong to the Kingdom of God, which a Man muſt be ſtrangely diſtemper'd in his Brain before he can ſo much as fancy.

And beſides, that Children, ſo long as Children, are looked upon as part of their Parents; and therefore as their Parents are, ſo are they: If the Parents be Heathen, ſo are the Children; if the Parents be Jews, ſo are the Children; if the Parents be Chriſtian, ſo are the Children too; nay, if either of the Parents be a Chriſtian or Diſciple, the Children of both are denominated from the better part, and ſo looked upon as Chriſtians too, as is plain, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14 *But now are they holy*, that is, in a Federal or Covenant-ſenſe they are in Covenant with God; they are Believers, Chriſtians, or Diſciples, becauſe one of their Parents is ſo.

Now ſeeing Children are Diſciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all Diſciples to be baptized, it neceſſarily

ceſſarily follows, that Children muſt be baptized too. So that the Opinion which aſſerts, That Children ought not to be baptized, is grounded upon a meer Miſtake, and upon groſs Ignorance of the true meaning of the Scripture, and eſpecially of this place, which is moſt ridiculouſly miſtaken for a Prohibition, it being rather a Command for Infant-Baptiſm.

But I muſt crave the Reader's Excuſe for this Digreſſion from the Matter principally intended, tho' I could not tell how to avoid it; nothing being more needful than to reſcue the words of our bleſſed Saviour from thoſe falſe Gloſſes, and horrible Abuſes which theſe laſt Ages have put upon them, eſpecially it coming ſo directly in my way as this did.

Secondly, Here is the Extent of their Commiſſion, which is very large indeed, not being directed to ſome few particular Perſons, but to Nations; nor to ſome particular Nations only, but to all Nations; *Go ye therefore and diſciple all Nations*; or, all the World, as it is, *Mark* 16. 15. This was that which the Prophet *Iſaiah*, or rather God by him, foretels, *Iſaiah* 49 6. which our Saviour himſelf ſeems to have reſpect unto, *Luke* 24. 46, 47. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this, That tho' the *Jews* hitherto had been the only

only People of God, and none but they admitted into Covenant with him, now the *Gentiles* alſo are to be brought in, and made Confederates or Copartners with them in the Covenant of Grace; that the Partition-Wall being now broke down, the Goſpel is to be preached to all other Nations, as well as the Jewiſh; Chriſt being now come to be *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of his People Iſrael.*

But tho' the words of the Commiſſion be ſo clear to this Purpoſe, yet the Apoſtles themſelves underſtood it not, 'till God had interpreted it from Heaven to St. *Peter*, ſhewing him in a Viſion, that he ſhould call no Man *common or unclean*, Acts 10. 28. From which time forward, he, with the reſt of the Apoſtles, obſerved their Commiſſion exactly in preaching to the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews*. And this was one End wherefore the Holy Ghoſt came down amongſt them, even to enable them to do what their Maſter had commanded them. For he had here commanded them to preach unto all Nations, but that they could not do, unleſs they could ſpeak all Languages, which therefore the Holy Ghoſt enabled them to do, *Acts* 2. 4, 5. which alſo is a clear demonſtration of the true Meaning and Purport of theſe words:

For

For there was no neceſſity that the Spirit ſhould teach the Apoſtles all Languages, but that the Son had firſt enjoined them to preach unto all Nations.

Thirdly, Hence is the manner whereby they are to admit *all Nations* into the Church of *Chriſt*, or into the Chriſtian Religion, by baptizing them *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* For the opening whereof we muſt know that Baptiſm was a Rite in common uſe amongſt the *Jews* before our Saviour's Time, by which they were wont to admit Proſelytes into their Religion, baptizing them *in the Name of the Father*, or of *God.* A little before our Saviour's appearance in the World, *John Baptiſt* being ſent to *prepare the way* for him, baptized the *Jews* themſelves; *As many as came unto him in the Name of the Meſſiah to come*, which was called, the *Baptiſm of Repentance. I indeed Baptize you*, ſays he, *with Water to Repentance; but he that comes after me, is mightier than I*, &c. Mat. 3. 11. But when our Saviour was to go to Heaven, he left Orders with his Apoſtles to make Diſciples; or, admit *all Nations* into the Religion which he had preached, confirmed with Miracles, and ſealed with his own Blood, by baptizing them *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*; which

which Form of Baptiſm, queſtionleſs, his Apoſtles faithfully obſerved all along, as may be gathered alſo from *Acts* 19. 2, 3. where we may obſerve, how when they ſaid, they had *not ſo much as heard of an Holy Ghoſt*; he wondering at that, asked them, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* plainly intimating, that if they had been baptized aright, according to *Chriſt*'s Inſtitution, they could not but have heard of the *Holy Ghoſt*, becauſe they had been baptized in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*; but v. 5. as alſo *Acts* 2. 38. c. 8. 16. we read of *Baptiſm adminiſtred in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*. From whence ſome have thought, that the Apoſtles baptized only the *Gentiles, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, but the *Jews* in the *Name of the Lord Jeſus* only; becauſe they believing in the Father already, if they were but baptized in the Name of *Jeſus*, and ſo teſtified their Belief that he was the *Meſſiah*, they could not but believe in his Spirit too; but this Expreſſion of baptizing in the Name of the *Lord Jeſus*, ſeems to me rather to intimate that Form of Baptiſm which the Lord *Jeſus* inſtituted: For doubtleſs, the Apoſtle obſerved the Precepts of our Lord better than ſo, as to do it one Way, when he had com-

manded

manded it to be done another; and baptized only in the Name of *Jeſus*, when he had enjoined them to baptize in the *Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.*

Neither did the Church ever eſteem that Baptiſm valid, which was not adminiſtred exactly according to the Inſtitution, in the Name of all the *Three Perſons*; which the Primitive Chriſtians were ſo ſtrict in the obſervance of, that it was injoyned, that all Perſons to be baptized ſhould be plunged *three* times into the Water, firſt at the *Name of the Father*, and then at the *Name of the Son*, and laſtly, at the *Name of the Holy Ghoſt*; that ſo every Perſon might be diſtinctly nominated, and ſo our Saviour's Inſtitution exactly obſerved, in the Adminiſtration of this Sacrament.

Hence alſo it was, That all Perſons to be baptized, were always required, either with their own Mouths, if adult, or if Infants, by their Sureties, to make a publick Confeſſion of their Faith in the *Three Perſons*, into whoſe Names they were to be baptized: For this indeed was always looked upon as the Sum and Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion, to *believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghoſt*; and they who believed in theſe *Three Perſons*, were ſtill reputed Chri-

Chriſtians; and they who did not, were eſteemed Infidels or Hereticks.

Yea, and our Saviour himſelf hath ſufficiently declared how neceſſary it is for us to believe this great Myſtery; as alſo how eſſential it is to a Chriſtian, ſeeing that he requires no more in order to our Initiation into his Church, but only that we be baptized *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* In which Words we may obſerve,

Firſt, A *Trinity* of *Perſons,* into whoſe Names we are baptized, the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* This is that *Myſtery* of *Myſteries* which is too high for Human Underſtandings to conceive, but not too great for a divine Faith to believe, even that although there be but One God, there are *Three Perſons,* the *Father,* the *Son,* and the *Holy Ghoſt,* every one of which is that One and the ſelf-ſame God; and therefore it is that Baptiſm is here commanded to be adminiſtred in the Name of all Three.

Now to confirm our Faith in this great *Myſtery,* whereinto we were all baptized, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, in few Terms, what Grounds we have in Scripture to believe it. For which end we muſt know, that though this *Myſtery* hath received great Light, by the riſing of the Sun of Righte-

Righteouſneſs upon the World, yet it did not lie altogether undiſcovered before, *yea, from the very Foundation of the World*, the Church, in all Ages, hath had ſufficient ground whereupon to build their Faith on this great and Fundamental Truth: For in the very Creation of the World, he that created it is called אלהים in the plural Number: And in the Creation of Man, he ſaid, *Let us make Man in our own Image*; from whence, though not a *Trinity*, yet a Plurality of Perſons is plainly manifeſt; yea, in the Beginning of the World too, we find both *Father, Son, and Spirit* concurring in the making of it.

For, *Firſt*, It is ſaid, *that God created heaven and earth*, and then, *that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*, Gen. 1. 2. There are Two Perſons, God, and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the World by his Word: *he ſaid let there be light, and there was light*. From which Expreſſion, Saint *John* himſelf concludes, *That all Things were made by the Son of God*, or *his Word*, John 1. 3. and ſo does St. *Paul*, Col. 1. 16.

Thus we read afterwards, *The Spirit of the Lord ſpake by me, and his Word by my tongue*, 2 Sam. 23. 2. where we have *Jehovah*, the *Spirit of Jehovah*, and the *Word of Jehovah*, plainly and diſtinctly ſet down.

down. As alſo in *Pſal.* 33. 6. and *Iſai.* 42. 1. where there is the Lord ſpeaking of his Son, and ſaying, *That he will put his Spirit upon him:* And this alſo ſeems to be the Reaſon, why the Holy Angels, when they praiſe God, ſay, *Holy, holy, holy Lord of Hoſts*, Iſa. 6. 3. Rev. 4. 8. ſaying, *Holy* thrice, in Reference to the *Three Perſons* they Adore.

Thus we might diſcover this Truth in the Old Teſtament, but in the New we can ſcarce look over it: For when *Jeſus* was baptized, *Matth.* 3. 16. had we, who know nothing but by our Senſes, been preſent at this time with *Jeſus* at *Jordan*, our very Senſes would have conveyed this Truth to our Underſtandings, whether we would or no. Here we ſhould have heard a *Voice from heaven*; whoſe was it, but *God the Father?* Here we ſhould have ſeen one coming out of *Jordan*; who was that but *God the Son?* Here we ſhould have ſeen ſomething elſe too, in the Form of a *Dove*, who was that but *God the Spirit?* Thus was *God the Father* heard ſpeaking; *God the Son* was ſeen aſcending out of the Water; and *God the Holy Ghoſt* deſcending from Heaven upon him. The firſt was heard in the ſound of a Voice, the ſecond was ſeen in the form of a Man, and the third was beheld in the ſhape of a Dove.

Voce

Voce Pater, natus Corpore, flamen Ave.

But there are many ſuch Places as this all the New Teſtament over, where the *Three Perſons* of the Godhead are diſtinctly mentioned, as *Luke* 1. 35. *John* 14. 16, 26. Chap. 16. 7. *Galat.* 4. 6. But the Words of Saint *Paul* are very remarkable too, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. And yet *that all theſe Three Perſons were but One God*, Gen. 18. 2, 3. *John* 10. 30. Saint *John* expreſly aſſerts, ſaying, *There are Three that bear record in heaven*, the *Father*, and the *Word*, and the *Spirit*, and theſe *Three* are *One*, 1 *John* 5. 7. Which certainly are as plain, and perſpicuous Terms as it's poſſible to expreſs ſo great a *Myſtery* in. But I need not have gone ſo far to have proved, That there are *Three* diſtinct *Perſons* in the Godhead: The Words I am treating of, being a ſufficient Demonſtration of it: For as all the *Three Perſons* met together at our Saviour's Baptiſm; ſo doth our Saviour here command, That all his Diſciples be baptized *in the Name* of all *Three*: And therefore I cannot but admire how any one ſhould dare to profeſs himſelf to be a Chriſtian, and yet deny, or oppoſe the Sacred *Trinity*, into which he was baptized when he was made a Chriſtian:

For, by this means, he renouncing his Baptiſm, blaſphemes *Chriſt*, unchriſtians himſelf, blotting his own Name out of the Catalogue of thoſe who were made Chriſtians, only by being baptized, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.*

II. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every Perſon in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: For here we ſee Divine Worſhip is to be performed to them all; and all that profeſs the true Religion muſt be baptized in the Name of the Son and Holy Ghoſt, as well as of the Father; which certainly would be the greateſt Abſurdity, yea, the moſt horrid Impiety imaginable, was not they God as well as he. For if they be not God, they are Creatures; if they be Creatures, Reaſon as well as Scripture forbids the ſame Honour and Worſhip to be conferred on them, which is given to God himſelf, and only due to him; which here, notwithſtanding, we ſee is given to them, and that by our Lord himſelf, commanding Baptiſm to be adminiſtred in his own Name, and in the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, as well as in the Name of the Father, and ſo making himſelf and the Spirit equal Sharers in the ſame Honour that is given to the Father. So that was there no other

place

place in the whole Scripture to prove it, this alone would be ſufficient to convince any Gainſayer, that the Son and Spirit are God as well as the Father, or rather the ſame God with him. But that I may unvail this *Myſtery*, and confirm this Truth more clearly, we will conſider each Perſon diſtinctly, and ſhew, that one as well as the other is really and truly God.

That the Father is God, none ever deny'd it, and therefore we need not prove it. But if the Father be God, the Son muſt needs be God too; for the ſame Names, Properties, Works and Worſhip, which, in Scripture, are aſcribed to the Father, are frequently aſcribed to the Son alſo in Scripture: The Father is called *Jehovah* in Scripture, ſo is the Son, *Hoſ.* 1. 7. *Jer.* 23. 6. The Father is called God, ſo is the Son, *John* 1. 1. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*: with God, as to his Perſon; God, as to his Nature. So alſo *John* 20. 28. *Acts* 20. 28, &c. Moreover, Is the Father *Alpha* and *Omega*, the firſt and the laſt? ſo is the Son, *Rev.* 1. 8. Is the Father Eternal? ſo is the Son, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Rev.* 1. 8. Is the Father Almighty? ſo is the Son, *Heb.* 1. 3. Is the Father every where? ſo is the Son, *Matt.* 18. 20. Doth the Father know all things? ſo doth

the Son, *John* 21. 17. *Chap.* 2. 24. Did the Father make all things? ſo did the Son, *John* 1. 3. Doth the Father preſerve all things? ſo doth the Son, *Heb.* 1. 3. Doth the Father forgive Sins? ſo doth the Son, *Matt.* 9. 6. Is the Father to be worſhipped? ſo is the Son, *Heb.* 1. 6. Is the Father to be honoured? ſo is the Son, *John* 5. 23. No wonder therefore that Chriſt being thus in the *Form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. He did not rob God of any Glory by ſaying himſelf was equal to him. The greateſt Wonder is, How any one can believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and yet deny this great Truth, than which nothing can be more plain from Scripture: Nothing being more frequently and more clearly aſſerted than this is. And, verily, it is well for us that it is ſo; for if Chriſt was not God, neither could he be our Saviour. None being able to free us from our Sins, but only he againſt whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Chriſt's Divinity, and yet expect Pardon and Salvation from him: All our Hopes and Expectations from him depending only upon his aſſumption of our Humane Nature into a Divine Perſon.

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And that the Holy Ghoſt alſo is God, is frequently aſſerted in the Holy Scriptures, which himſelf Indited. Indeed his very Inditing of the Scriptures was a clear Argument of his Deity, as well as the Scriptures indited by him. What Man, what Angel, what Creature, who but God could compoſe ſuch Articles of Faith, enjoin ſuch Divine Precepts, foretel and fulfil ſuch Prophecies as in Scripture are contained, who ſpake unto, or by the Prophets? Whom did they mean, when they ſaid, *Thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts?* Who was this Lord of Hoſts that inſtructed them what to ſpeak or write? Was it God the Father, or God the Son? No, but it was God the Holy Ghoſt: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Acts* 28. 25. *Chap.* 21. 11. The Holy Ghoſt therefore being the Lord of Hoſts, he muſt needs be God, there being no Perſon that is or can be called the Lord of Hoſts, but He that is the very and eternal God.

This alſo may be gathered from 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;* for none can be the Temple of God, but he in whom God dwells; for it is

God's dwelling in a place that makes that place the Temple of God; and yet we are here ſaid to be the Temple of God, becauſe the Spirit dwelleth in us. And ſo elſewhere, *Know ye not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt that is in you?* 1 Cor. 6. 19. which could not be unleſs the Holy Ghoſt was God.

Another expreſs Scripture we have for it in *Acts* 5. 3, 4. where St. *Peter* propounds this Queſtion to *Ananias*, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt?* And then tells him in the next Verſe, *Thou haſt not lyed to men but to God*: And ſo expreſly aſſerts the Holy Ghoſt to be God.

Moreover, that the Holy Ghoſt is truly God, coequal to the Father and Son, is plain, in that the Scriptures aſſert him to be, to have, and to do whatſoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doth, as God. For, Is the Father and Son eternal? ſo is the Spirit, *Heb.* 9. 14. Is God the Father and the Son every where? ſo is the Spirit, *Pſal.* 139. 7. Is God the Father, and the Son, a wiſe, underſtanding, powerful, and knowing God? ſo is the Spirit, *Iſaiah* 11. 2. Are we baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son? ſo are we baptized in the Name of the Holy Ghoſt. May we Sin againſt the Father and the Son? ſo may

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we Sin too againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Nay, the Sin againſt this Perſon only is accounted by our Saviour to be a Sin never to be pardoned, *Matt.* 12. 31, 32. We may Sin againſt God the Father, and our Sin may be pardoned: We may Sin againſt God the Son, and our Sin may be pardoned: But if we Sin or Speak againſt the Holy Ghoſt, that ſhall *never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor yet in that which is to come.* But if the Holy Ghoſt be not God, how can we Sin againſt him? or how comes our Sin againſt him only to be unpardonable, unleſs he be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable becauſe he is God, for then the Sins againſt the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, ſeeing they both are God as well as he: Yet tho' this Sin is not therefore unpardonable, becauſe he is God, yet it could not be unpardonable unleſs he was God. For, ſuppoſing him not to be God, but a Creature, and yet the Sin againſt him to be unpardonable, then the Sin againſt a Creature would be unpardonable, when Sins againſt God himſelf are pardoned: Which to ſay, would, it ſelf, I think, come near to the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. But ſeeing our Saviour deſcribes this unpardonable Sin, by blaſpheming or ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt, let them have a care that they be

not found guilty of it, who dare deny the Holy Ghoſt to be really and truly God, and ſo blaſpheme and ſpeak the worſt that they can againſt him.

III. We have ſeen what Ground we have to believe, that there are Three Perſons in the Godhead, and that every one of theſe Perſons is God; we are now to conſider the Order of thoſe Perſons in the Trinity, deſcribed in the Words before us.

Firſt, The Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghoſt; every one of which is really and truly God; and yet they are All but One real and true God. A Myſtery which we are all bound to believe, but yet muſt have a great Care how we ſpeak of it; it being both eaſie and dangerous to miſtake in expreſſing ſo myſterious a Truth as this is. If we think of it, How hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically Divine Nature, in more than one and the ſame Divine Perſon? or, upon Three Divine Perſons in no more than One and the ſame Divine Nature? If we ſpeak of it, How hard is to find out fit Words to expreſs it? If I ſay, The Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt be Three, and every One diſtinctly God, it is true: But if I ſay, They be Three, and every one a diſtinct God, it is falſe. I may ſay, The Divine Perſons are diſtinct in the Divine Nature;

ture: But I cannot ſay, That the Divine Nature is divided into the Divine Perſons. I may ſay, God the Father is One God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghoſt is One God: But I cannot ſay, That the Father is One God, and the Son Another God, and the Holy Ghoſt a Third God. I may ſay, The Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot ſay, That he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another who is God; yet I cannot ſay, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For, all this while, tho' their Nature be the ſame, their Perſons are diſtinct; and tho' their Perſons be diſtinct, ſtill their Nature is the ſame. So that tho' the Father be the firſt Perſon in the Godhead, the Son the Second, the Holy Ghoſt the Third; yet the Father is not the Firſt, the Son a Second, the Holy Ghoſt a Third God. So hard a thing is it to word ſo great a Myſtery aright; or to fit ſo high a Truth with Expreſſions ſuitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it. And therefore I ſhall not uſe many words about it, leſt ſome ſhould ſlip from me unbecoming of it: But, in as few Terms as I can, I will endeavour to ſhew, upon what account the Father is the Firſt, the Son the Second, and the Holy Ghoſt the Third Perſon in the Trinity. *Firſt*,

First, therefore, The Father is placed first, and really is the First Person, not as if he was before the other Two, for they are all Coeternal; but because the other Two received their Essence from him: For the Son was begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceedeth both from Father and Son: And therefore the Father is termed by the Primitive Christians, ῥίζα καὶ λήγη Θεότητος the *Root and the Fountain of Deity.* As in Waters there is the Fountain or Well Head; then there is the Spring that boils up out of that Fountain; and then there is the Stream that flows both from the Fountain and the Spring; and yet all these are but one and the same Water: So here, *God the Father* is the Fountain of Deity; *the Son*, as the Spring that boils up out of the Fountain; and the *Holy Ghost*, that flows from both, and yet all Three is but one and the same God; The same may be also explained by another familiar Instance: The Sun, you know, begets Beams, and from the Sun and Beams together, proceed both Light and Heat: So God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together, proceeds the Spirit of Knowledge and Grace: But as the Sun is not before the Beams, nor the Beams before the Light and Heat, but all are together: So neither is the Father

ther before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghoſt, but only in Order and Relation to one another; In which only reſpect, the Father is the firſt Perſon in the *Trinity*.

Secondly, The Son is the ſecond Perſon, who is called the Son, yea, and the only begotten Son of God, becauſe he was begotten of the Father, not as others are by Spiritual Regeneration, but by Eternal Generation, as none but himſelf is: For the opening whereof, we muſt know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not himſelf Steril or Barren, but he that hath given Power to Animals, to generate and produce others in their own Nature, is himſelf much more able to produce one, not only like himſelf, but of the ſelf-ſame Nature with himſelf, as he did in begetting his Son by communicating his own unbegotten Eſſence and Nature to him. For the Perſon of the Son was moſt certainly begotten of the Father, otherwiſe he would not be his Son; but his Eſſence was unbegotten, otherwiſe he would not be God. And therefore the higheſt Apprehenſions that we can frame of this great Myſtery, the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the Perſon of the Father to have communicated his Divine Eſſence to the Perſon of the Son.

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And ſo of himſelf begetting his other Self the Son, by communicating his own Eternal and unbegotten Eſſence to him. I ſay, by communicating of his Eſſence, not of his Perſon to him, for then they would be both the ſame Perſon, as now they are of the ſame Eſſence: The Eſſence of the Father did not beget the Son by communicating his Perſon to him, but the Perſon of the Father begat the Son by communicating his Eſſence to him; ſo that the Perſon of the Son is begotten, not communicated; but the Eſſence of the Son is communicated not begotten.

This Notion of the Father's begetting the Son by communicating his Eſſence to him, I ground upon the Son's own Words, who certainly beſt knew how himſelf was begotten; *for, as the Father*, ſaith he, *hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf*, John 5. 26. To have Life in himſelf, is an Eſſential Property of the Divine Nature, and therefore whereſoever that is given, or communicated, the Nature it ſelf muſt needs be given, and communicated too.

Now here we ſee how God the Father Communicated this his Eſſential Property, and ſo his Eſſence to the Son; and, by conſequence, though he be a diſtinct Perſon from him, yet he hath the ſame unbegot-

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ten Eſſence with him: And therefore, as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath the Son Life in himſelf; and ſo all other eſſential Properties of the Divine Nature, only with this Perſonal Diſtinction, that the Father hath this Life in himſelf, not from the Son, but from himſelf; whereas the Son hath it, not from himſelf but from the Father: Or, the Father is God, of himſelf, not of the Son; the Son is the ſame God, but from the Father, not from himſelf; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son is rightly called by the Council of *Nice*, *God of God*, *Light of Light*, yea, *very God of very God.*

Thirdly, Having thus ſpoken of the two firſt Perſons in the Sacred *Trinity*, we now come to the laſt, the *Holy Ghoſt*. The laſt, I ſay, not in Nature or Time, but only in Order: For, as to their Nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to Time, is one before another; none of them being meaſured by Time, but all and every one of them Eternity it ſelf. But though not in Nature or Time, yet in Order, one muſt needs be before another: For the Father is of himſelf, receiving his Eſſence neither from the Son, nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in Order, before both; the Son received his Eſſence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in Order, is before the Spirit,

Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit receiving his Eſſence both from the Father and the Son, muſt needs, in Order, be after both.

I confeſs, the Spirit is no where in Scripture ſaid to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inſerting this into the *Nicene Creed*, was the occaſion of that Schiſm betwixt the *Weſtern* and *Eaſtern* Churches, which hath now continued for many Ages; in which, I think, both Parties are blameworthy; the *Weſtern* Churches for inſerting this Clauſe following into the *Nicene Creed*, without the Conſent of a General Council; and the *Eaſtern* for denying ſo plain a Truth as this is: For though the Spirit be not ſaid to proceed from the Son yet he is called *the Spirit of the Son*, Gal. 4. 6. Rom. 8. 9. which, queſtionleſs, he would never have been, did not he proceed from the Son, as well as from the Father. And, verily, the Father communicating his own individual Eſſence, and ſo whatſoever he is (his Paternal Relation excepted) to the Son, could not but communicate this to him alſo, even to have the Spirit proceeding from him, as it doth from himſelf. So that as whatſoever the Father hath Originally in himſelf, that hath the Son by Communication from the Father: So hath the Son this, the Spirit's proceeding

ing from him by Communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himſelf: And the Spirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is placed after both, not only in the Words before us, but alſo in 1 *John* 5. 7. and ſo elſewhere.

From what I have hitherto diſcourſed concerning this great *Myſtery, the Trinity* in *Unity*, and *Unity* in *Trinity*, I ſhall gather ſome few Inferences, and ſo conclude.

1. Is the Son God, yea, the ſame God with the Father? Hence I obſerve, what a ſtrange Myſtery the Work of Man's Redemption is, that God himſelf ſhould become Man. And he that was begotten of his Father, without a Mother, from Eternity, ſhould be born of his Mother, without a Father, in Time; that he who was perfect God, like unto the Father, in every thing, his Perſonal Properties only excepted, ſhould alſo be perfect Man, like unto us in all things, our perſonal Infirmities only excepted; that he that made the World ſhould be himſelf made in it; that Eternity ſhould ſtoop to Time, Glory be wrapt in Miſery, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs hid under a Clod of Earth; that Innocence ſhould be betrayed, Juſtice condemned, and Life it ſelf ſhould die, and all to redeem Man from Death to Life. Oh Wonder of

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Wonders! how juſtly may we ſay with the Apoſtle, *without controverſie, great is the myſtery of godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 3. 16.

2. Is the Spirit alſo GOD? Hence I obſerve, that it is God alone that can make us Holy; for ſeeing the Scripture all along aſcribes our Sanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himſelf really and truly God, it neceſſarily followeth, that the ſpecial Concurrence and Influence of Almighty God himſelf is neceſſary to the making us really and truly Holy.

3. Are all Three Perſons in the *Trinity* one and the ſame God? Hence I infer, They are to have one and the ſame Honour conferred upon them, and one and the ſame worſhip performed unto them. Or, as our Saviour himſelf ſaith, *That all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, John 5. 23. and *ye believe in God, believe alſo in me*, John 14. 1. and *as we pray to the Father, ſo* ſhould *we pray to the Son* too, as the Apoſtles did, *Luke* 17. 5. and St. *Stephen*, Acts 7. 59. and St. *Paul* to all Three, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14.

4. Is Baptiſm to be Adminiſtred *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt?* Hence I obſerve, how neceſſary it is to believe in theſe *Three Perſons*, in order to our being real and true Chriſtians: For we being made Chriſtians in the Name of all Three, that Man ceaſeth

ceaſeth to be a Chriſtian that believes only in One: For Faith in *God the Father*, *God the Son*, and *God the Holy Ghoſt*, is neceſſary to the very Conſtitution of a Chriſtian; and is the Principal, if not the only Characteriſtical Note whereby to diſtinguiſh a Chriſtian from another Man; yea, from a *Turk*: For this is the chief thing, that the *Turks*, both in their *Alcoran* and other Writings, upbraid Chriſtians for, even becauſe they believe a *Trinity* of Perſons in the Divine Nature. For which Cauſe they frequently ſay they are *People that believe God hath Companions*; ſo that take away this Article of our Chriſtian Faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but a little difference betwixt a Chriſtian and a Turk: But by this means, Turks would not turn Chriſtians, but Chriſtians Turks, if this Fundamental Article of the Chriſtian Religion was once removed: For he that doth not believe this is no Chriſtian upon that very account, becauſe he doth not believe this by which a Chriſtian is made: And whatſoever elſe Errors a Man may hold, yet if he believes in *God the Father*, *God the Son*, and *God the Holy Ghoſt*, I cannot, I dare not but acknowledge him to be a Chriſtian in general, becauſe he holds faſt to the Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion, though perhaps he

may build upon it *Hay* and *Stubble*, and ſo his Superſtructure be infirm and rotten.

I ſhall conclude with a Word of Advice to all ſuch as call themſelves by the Name of *Chriſt*: I ſuppoſe and believe they are all Chriſtians, from their taking that Name; and therefore I need not uſe any Arguments to perſuade them to turn Chriſtians, for ſo they are already by Profeſſion: But, ſeeing that they are Chriſtians, let me deſire them to conſider how they came to be ſo? even by being baptized *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* And if they deſire to be Chriſtians ſtill, I muſt adviſe them to continue ſtedfaſt in that Faith whereby they were made ſo. Of all the Errors and Hereſies which *Satan* hath ſowed amongſt us, let us have an eſpecial care to avoid ſuch as ſtrike at the very Foundation of our Religion; I mean the *Arians*, *Macedonians*, *Socinians*, and all manner of *Antitrinitarians*, ſuch as deny the moſt ſacred *Trinity*.

But I hope we have better learned *Chriſt*, than to hearken to ſuch Opinions as theſe are; and therefore my next Advice in brief is only this, That as we excel others in the Truth of our Profeſſion, ſo we would excel them alſo in the Holineſs of our Life and Converſation: Let us manifeſt our ſelves to be Chriſtians indeed, by believing

ing the Aſſertions, truſting on the Promiſes, fearing the Threatnings, and obeying the Precepts of Chriſt our Maſter, that both Infidels and Hereticks may be convinced of their Errors, by ſeeing us outſtripping them in our Piety towards God, Equity to our Neighbours, Charity to the Poor, Unity amongſt our ſelves, and Love to all: For this would be a clear Demonſtration, that our Faith is better than theirs is, when our Lives are holier than theirs are; and for our Encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, That if we believe thus, as *Chriſt* hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we ſhall alſo obtain what he hath promiſed, even *Eternal Happineſs in the World to come*; where we ſhall ſee, enjoy, and praiſe that God, into whoſe Name we are baptized, even *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt* for evermore. There, with Angels and Arch-Angels, with the Heavens and all the Powers therein; with Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the bleſſed Inhabitants of thoſe everlaſting Manſions; with the glorious Company of the Apoſtles, the goodly Fellowſhip of the Prophets; the noble Army of Martyrs; all the Company of Heaven, and the Holy Church throughout all the World, we ſhall Eternally laud and magnify thy Sacred Name: "O God, the Father of Heaven; O God,

" the Son, Redeemer of the World; O God
" the Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Fa-
" ther and the Son; O Holy, Bleſſed,
" and Glorious Trinity, Three Perſons
" and One God, evermore praiſing thee,
" the Father of an Infinite Majeſty; to-
" gether with thine Honourable, True
" and Only Son; thee the King of Glory,
" O Chriſt; and thee, O Holy Ghoſt, the
" Comforter; ſtill joyning with the hea-
venly Choire, and ſaying, " Holy, holy,
" Lord God of Hoſts, Heaven and Earth
" are full of thy Glory; Glory be to thee,
" O Lord, moſt high. We praiſe thee,
" we bleſs thee, we worſhip thee, we
" glorify thee, we give Thanks to thee for
" thy great Glory, O Lord God, Hea-
" venly King, God the Father Almighty.
" O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jeſu
" Chriſt; O Lord God, Lamb of God,
" Son of the Father, that takeſt away the
" Sins of the World, and ſitteſt at the
" Right-hand of God the Father, O Bleſ-
" ſed, Glorious, and Eternal Spirit; for
" thou only art Holy, thou only art the
" Lord; thou only, O Chriſt, with the
" Holy Ghoſt, art moſt high in the Glory
" of God the Father; for thine, O Lord,
" is the Kingdom, and the Power, and
" the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us thy Servants, Grace, by the confeſſion of a true Faith to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the Power of the Divine Majeſty to worſhip the Unity; we beſeech thee that thou wouldſt keep us ſtedfaſt in this Faith, and evermore defend us from all Adverſities, who liveſt and reigneſt one God, World without End. Amen.

And now having led the Chriſtian thro' this firſt Stage of his Courſe, and inſtructed him in the Principles of his Religion, and in the great *Myſtery of the Trinity*, into which he was baptized, it may be fit to bring him into the World, and ſhew him how he ought to demean himſelf in regard to the Things of it.

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THOUGHTS

UPON

WORLDLY RICHES.

SECT. I.

HE that ſeriouſly conſiders the Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Religion, obſerving the Excellency of its Doctrines, the Clearneſs of its Precepts, the Severity of its Threatnings, together with the Faithfulneſs of its Promiſes, and the Certainty of its Principles to truſt to; ſuch a one may juſtly be aſtoniſhed, and admire what ſhould be the reaſon that they who profeſs this not only the moſt excellent, but only true Religion in the World, ſhould notwithſtanding be generally as wicked, debauched and prophane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are ſo, is but too plain and obvious to every one that

that obſerves their Actions, and compares them with the Practices of Jews, Turks, and Infidels. For what Sin have they amongſt them which we have not as rife amongſt our ſelves? Are they intemperate and luxurious? Are they envious and malicious againſt one another? Are they uncharitable and cenſorious? Are they given to Extortion, Rapine, and Oppreſſion? So are moſt of thoſe who are called Chriſtians. Do they blaſpheme the Name of God, profane his Sabbaths, contemn his Word, deſpiſe his Ordinances, and trample upon the Blood of his only Son? How many have we amongſt our ſelves that do theſe things as much as they?

But how comes this about, that they who are baptized into the Name of Chriſt, and profeſs the Religion which he eſtabliſhed in the World, ſhould be no better than other People, and in ſome reſpects far worſe? Is it becauſe though they profeſs the Goſpel yet they do not underſtand it? Nor know what Sins are forbidden, nor what Duties are injoined in it? That none can plead, eſpecially amongſt us who have the Goſpel ſo clearly revealed, ſo fully interpreted, ſo conſtantly preach'd to us as we have. Inſomuch that if there be any one Perſon amongſt us, that underſtands not what is neceſſary to be known, in order to

our everlaſting Happineſs, it is becauſe we will not: wilfully ſhutting our Eyes againſt the Light.

But what then ſhall we impute this wonder to, that Chriſtians are generally as bad as Heathens? Does Chriſt in his Goſpel diſpence with their Impieties, and give them Indulgences for their Sins, and Licenſe to break the moral Law? It is true, his pretended Vicar at *Rome* doth ſo, but far be it from us to father our Sins upon him, who came into the World on purpoſe to ſave us from them. Indeed if we repent and turn from Sin, he hath both purchaſed and promiſed Pardon and Forgiveneſs to us, but not till then: But hath expreſly told us the contrary, aſſuring us that *except we repent we muſt all periſh*, Luke 13. 3. I confeſs there have been ſuch blaſphemous Hereticks amongſt us, called *Antinomians*, who are altogether for Faith without good Works, making as if Chriſt by erecting his Goſpel deſtroy'd the moral Law; but none can entertain ſuch an horrible Opinion as that is, whoſe ſinful Practices have not ſo far depraved their Principles, that they believe it is ſo only becauſe they would have it to be ſo, directly contrary to our Saviour's own Words, *Matt.* 5. 17. *Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil.* Bu.

I hope there is none of us but have better learned Chriſt than to think that he came to patronize our Sins, who was *ſent to bleſs us, by turning away every one of us from our Iniquities*, Acts 3. 26. But how come Chriſtians then to be as bad and ſinful as other Men? Is it becauſe they are as deſtitute as other Men of all Means whereby to become better? No, this cannot poſſibly be the Reaſon: For nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at leaſt may, if we will, have whatſoever can any ways conduce to the making us either holy here or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto revealed to us in the Word of God, we have that Word frequently expounded and applyed to us; we have all free Acceſs not only to the Ordinances which God hath appointed for our Converſion, but even to the very Sacraments themſelves, whereby our Faith may be confirmed, and our Souls nouriſhed to Eternal Life. And more than all this too, we have many gracious and faithful Promiſes, that if we do but what we can, God for Chriſt's ſake will afford us ſuch Aſſiſtances of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we ſhall be enabled to perform univerſal Obedience to the moral Law, ſuch as God for Chriſt's ſake will accept of, inſtead of that Perfection which the Law re-

requires. So that now, if we be not all as real and true Saints, as good and pious Chriſtians as ever lived, it is certainly our own Faults: For we have all things neceſſary to the making of us ſuch, and if we were not wanting to our ſelves, it is impoſſible we ſhould fail of having all our Sins ſubdued under us, and all true Grace and Virtue implanted in us. Inſomuch that ſince the Chriſtian Religion was firſt revealed to the World, there have been certainly Millions of Souls converted by it, who now are glorify'd Saints in Heaven, which once were as ſinful Creatures upon Earth as we now are. But it ſeems they found the Goſpel an effectual Means of Converſion and Salvation; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any Defect in the Goſpel, or the Chriſtian Religion, that we are not all as good Men as ever lived, and by conſequence better than the Profeſſors of all other Religions in the World.

But what then ſhall we ſay to this Wonder of Wonders, that Chriſtians themſelves in our Age live ſuch looſe and diſſolute Lives as generally they do? What ſhould be the reaſon that all manner of Sin and Evil ſhould be both practiſed and indulged amongſt us, as much as in the darkeſt Corners of the World, upon which the Goſpel never yet ſhined? Why, when we have ſearch-

ſearched into all the Reaſons that poſſibly can be imagined, next to the Degeneracy and Corruption of our Nature, this muſt needs be acknowledged as one of the chief and principal, that Men living upon Earth, and converſing ordinarily with nothing but ſenſible and material Objects, they are ſo much taken up with them, that thoſe divine and ſpiritual Truths, which are revealed in the Goſpel, make little or no Impreſſion at all upon them; though they hear what the Goſpel ſaith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concerned about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their Affections being all bent and inclined only to the things of this World. And therefore it is no wonder, that they run with ſo full a Career into Sin and Wickedneſs, notwithſtanding their Profeſſion of the Goſpel, ſeeing their natural Propenſity and Inclination to the things of this World, are ſo ſtrong and prevalent within them, that they will not ſuffer them to think ſeriouſly upon, much leſs to concern themſelves about any thing elſe.

The Apoſtle, in his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, Chap. 6. endeavouring to perſuade Men from the over eager Deſire of earthly Enjoyments, preſſes this Conſideration upon us, that ſuch an inordinate Deſire of the things of this World betrays Men into many and great

great Temptations, *ver.* 8, and 9. And then he gives this as the Reaſon of it, *ver.* 10. *For the love of mony is the root of all evil*; that is, in brief, The Love of Riches and temporal Enjoyments is the great Reaſon why Men are guilty of ſuch great and atrocious Crimes as generally they are; there being no Evil but what ſprings from this, as from its Root and Origine; which is ſo plain a Truth, ſo conſtantly and univerſally experienced in all Ages, that the Heathens themſelves, the ancient Poets and Philoſophers, could not but take notice of it. For *Bion* the Philoſopher was wont to ſay that φιλαργυρία *the Love of Mony* was κακίας μητρόπολις *the Metropolis of Wickedneſs.* And *Apollodorus*, ἀλλὰ χεδόν τε τὸ κεφάλαιον τῶν κακῶν εἴρηκας ἐν φιλαργυρίᾳ, ϗ πανθ' ἕνι. *When thou ſpeakeſt of the Love of Mony, thou mentioneſt the Head of all Evils, for they are all contained in that.* To the ſame purpoſe is that of the Poet *Phocylides*, ἡ γὰρ φιλοχρημοσύνη μήτηρ κακότητος ἁπάσης, *The Love of Riches is the Mother of all Wickedneſs.* What theſe ſaw by the Light of Nature, hath here divine Authority ſtamped upon it; God himſelf aſſerting the ſame thing by this Apoſtle, ἐστὶ γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ῥίζα ἡ φιλαργυρία, *The Love of Mony is the Root of all Evils*; which, that we

may

may the better underſtand, we muſt conſider,

1. What is here meant by Mony.
2. What by the Love of Riches.
3. How the Love of Mony is the Root of all Evils.

As for the firſt, I need not inſiſt long upon it, all Men knowing well enough what Mony is. But we muſt remember that by Mony is here underſtood not only Silver and Gold, but all earthly Comforts, Poſſeſſions, and Enjoyments whatſoever, whether Goods, Lands, Houſes, Wares, Wealth, or Riches of any ſort or kind whatſoever.

2. By the Love of Mony we are to underſtand that Sin which the Scriptures call Covetouſneſs, and the true nature and notion of it conſiſteth eſpecially in three things.

1. In having a real Eſteem and Value for Wealth or Mony, as if it was a thing that could make Men happy, or better than otherwiſe they would be; as it is plain all covetous Men have their Deſire of Riches proceeding only from a groundleſs Fancy, that their Happineſs conſiſts in having much, which makes them ſet a greater Value upon Riches, preferring them before other things, even before God himſelf. Hence the Love of Mony is altogether inconſiſtent with the Love of God, 1 *John*

2, 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* It being impoſſible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the World too at the ſame time.

2. Hence the Love of Mony ſuppoſeth alſo a Delight and Complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the aforeſaid Eſteem they have for it: For being poſſeſſed with a fond Opinion, that the more they have the better they are, they cannot but be pleaſed with the thoughts of their preſent Enjoyments, as the rich Man was in the Goſpel, *Luke* 12. 16, 17, 18, 19. who becauſe his Ground brought forth plentifully, reſolved to enlarge his Barns, and lay up Stores for many Years, and bid his Soul take her Eaſe. How many ſuch Fools have we amongſt us, who pleaſe and pride themſelves with the thoughts of their being rich?

3. From this Eſteem for, and Complacency in Mony or Wealth, it follows that Men are ſtill deſirous of having more, placing their Happineſs only in Riches; becauſe they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence how much ſoever they have, they ſtill deſire more, and therefore Covetouſneſs in Scripture is ordinarily expreſſed by πλεονεξία, which properly ſignifies an inordinate Deſire of having

ving more, which kind of Deſires can never be ſatisfied, becauſe they are able to deſire more than all the World, and to raiſe themſelves as high and as far as the infinite Good it ſelf. Now ſuch a Love of Mony as this is, conſiſting in having a real Eſteem for it, in taking Pleaſure and Delight in it, and in longing and thirſting after it; this is that which the Apoſtle here ſaith *is the Root of all Evil*; that is, it is the great and principal Cauſe of all ſorts of Evil that Men are guilty of, or obnoxious to; which that I may clearly demonſtrate to you, we muſt firſt know in general that there are but two ſorts of Evil in the World, the Evil of Sin, and the Evil of Puniſhment or Miſery; and the Love of Mony is the Cauſe of them both.

To begin with the Evil of Sin, which is the only Fountain from whence all other Evils flow, and it ſelf doth certainly ſpring from the Love of Mony, as much or more than from anything elſe in the whole World. Inſomuch that the greateſt part of thoſe Sins which any of us are guilty of, proceed from this Maſter Sin, even the Love of Mony, as might eaſily be ſhewn from a particular Enumeration of thoſe Sins which Men generally are addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically in demonſtrating this, ſo as to convince

Men

Men of the Danger of this above moſt other Sins, I deſire it may be conſidered that there are two ſorts of Sins that we are all guilty of, Sins of Omiſſion and Sins of Commiſſion, under which two Heads all Sins whatſoever are comprehended.

Firſt, for Sins of Omiſſion. It is plain that our Love of Mony is the chief and principal Cauſe that makes us neglect and omit our Duties to God and Man, as it is manifeſt we moſt of us do. In ſpeaking unto which I muſt take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal Salvation; and therefore howſoever ſome may reſent it, I am bound in Duty and Conſcience to mind Men of their Sins, and particularly of this great prevailing Sin of Covetouſneſs, or inordinate Love of Mony, which moſt Men give but too much reaſon to fear they are guilty of, and therefore I may tell them of it without any breach of Charity. It is true, I cannot pretend to be a Searcher of Hearts, that is only God's Prerogative, and therefore I ſhall not take upon me to judge or cenſure any particular Perſons; but I ſhall ſpeak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular Application of it to himſelf. Neither ſhall I ſpeak of things at random, but I ſhall inſtance only in ſuch Sins which I can aſſert upon my own Knowledge that moſt Men

allow

Mat. 6. 21. *For where the Treasure is there will the Heart be also*

P. La Vergne Inv: M. V.dr Gucht sculp.

allow themſelves, and that upon this account only, becauſe they love Mony.

For firſt, what is the reaſon that ſo few, indeed ſcarce any of us, are at Prayers at Church upon the Week-Day, to perform our Devotion to him that made us? Is it becauſe we think it impertinent to pray unto him? No; our Preſence there on Sundays contradicts that, and I have more Charity than to think that any are ſo atheiſtical as to imagine it to be ſuperfluous to pay our Homage to the ſupreme Governor of the World, and to implore his Aid and Bleſſing upon us? But what then ſhould be the reaſon of it? in plain Terms it is nothing elſe but becauſe Men love Mony, and therefore are loth to ſpare ſo much time from their Shops or Callings, as to go to Church to pray to God for what they want, and praiſe his Name for what they have. Let us ſearch into our own Hearts, and we ſhall acknowledge this to be the only reaſon of it. But it is a very fooliſh one, for who can bleſs us but God?

2. What is the reaſon that ſo many neglect the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Do not we all look upon it as our Duty to receive it? I dare ſay we do; Chriſt himſelf having commanded it, *Luke* 22. 19. and it being the only way whereby to manifeſt our ſelves to be Chriſtians, what then

can be the reaſon of this Neglect of it, but merely the Love of Mony, which makes Men loth to ſpend time in preparing and fitting themſelves for it.

But ſeeing Men thus excommunicate themſelves by not coming to the Communion, in plain Terms, they deſerve to be excommunicated by the Cenſures of the Church. And if God ſhould in his Providence deprive them of ever having an Opportunity of receiving the Sacrament again, they muſt even thank themſelves for it. Howſoever this ſhall be their preſent Puniſhment, that they ſhall be deprived of it, until they think it worth their while to come unto it.

3 What is the reaſon that the Sabbath is ſo profaned? That ſo many take their Recreations upon the Lord's Day, but becauſe they cannot ſpare time for it from getting Mony upon other Days? thinking the Day long, becauſe they can get little in it, as *Amos* 8. 5 And why do ſo many profane the Sabbath, while at Church, by thinking upon the World, but becauſe they love it? *Ezek.* 33. 31.

4. What is the reaſon that Charity is ſo cold, but that the Love of Mony is grown ſo hot amongſt us? For do not we all know it is our Duty to relieve the Poor? Hath not God expreſly commanded it? Hath

not

not he threatned a Curſe to them that do it not, and promiſed a Bleſſing to them that do it? What then can be the reaſon that ſo many neglect it, but becauſe they love their Mony more than God?

To theſe might be added many other Sins, which the Love of Money daily occaſions. For what is the reaſon that many read the Scriptures ſo ſeldom, and ſo curſorily as they do? What is the reaſon that they either have none, or commonly neglect their Family Duties? That every ſlight Occaſion will make them omit their private Devotions; that they can find no time to look into their own Hearts, to conſider their Condition, and meditate upon God and Chriſt, and the World to come. What is the reaſon that many know their Shops better than their Hearts, and are acquainted with the temper of their Body more than with the conſtitution of their Souls? That they are ſo careful and induſtrious in the Proſecution of their worldly Deſigns, ſo negligent and remiſs in looking after Heaven? What is or can be the reaſon of theſe things, but that inordinate Love and Affection they have for Mony, or the things of this World, which makes them ſo eager in the purſuit of them, that they forget they have any thing elſe to mind, and ſo much taken up with worldly Buſi-

neſs, that God, and Chriſt, and Heaven, and Soul, and all, muſt give way to it? Oh, the Folly and Madneſs of ſinful Men! what a ſtrange corrupt and degenerate thing is the Heart of Man become! that we ſhould be ſo fooliſh and unwiſe as to prefer our Bodies before our Souls, Earth before Heaven, Toys and Trifles before the eternal God, the worſt of Evils before the beſt of Goods, even Sin it ſelf, with all the Miſeries that attend it, before Holineſs and that eternal Happineſs which is promiſed to it! And all for nothing elſe but the love of a little Pelf and Traſh, which hath no other worth but what our own diſtracted Fancies put upon it.

And if the Love of Mony be the Root of ſo many Sins of Omiſſion, how many Sins of Commiſſion muſt needs ſprout from it? Indeed they are ſo many that it would be an endleſs thing to reckon them all up, and therefore I ſhall not undertake it, but ſhall mention only ſuch of them as every one upon the firſt reading ſhall acknowledge to be the curſed Offspring of this one fruitful and big-bellyed Sin of Covetouſneſs, or the Love of Mony, of which *Cicero* obſerves, that *Nullum eſt Officium tam ſanctum atque ſolenne, quod non avaritia comminuere atque violare ſoleat.* So we may ſay on the other ſide too, That there is no

Sin

Sin ſo great and horrid, but Covetouſneſs will ſometime put Men upon it.

Is Idolatry a Sin? yea certainly, one of the greateſt that any Man can be guilty of, and yet nothing can be more plain, than that Covetouſneſs, whereſoever it comes, draws it along with it; inſomuch that every covetous Man is aſſerted by God himſelf to be an Idolater, *Eph.* 5. 5. and Covetouſneſs to be Idolatry it ſelf, *Col.* 3. 5. And the reaſon is plain; for what is Idolatry but to give that Worſhip to a Creature which is due only unto God? But what higher Acts of Worſhip can we perform to God, than to love him and to truſt on him, which it is certain every covetous Man gives to his Mony; and therefore Covetouſneſs is here called φιλαργυρία, *the Love of Mony.* And we cannot but be all ſenſible what Truſt and Confidence Men are wont to repoſe in their Eſtates and Incomes. But ſuch will ſay, we do not fall down before our Mony, nor pray unto it; but they truſt on it, and that is infinitely more than bare praying to it: And though they do not bow down before it in their Bodies yet they make all the Faculties of their Souls to bow and ſtoop unto it; they love and deſire it, they rejoyce and delight in having of it, they are grieved and troubled for nothing ſo much as the parting with it, not fear any thing ſo much as the loſing of it.

But they will ſay again, we do not ſacrifice to our Bags, nor burn Incenſe to our Eſtates; we never did, nor intend to offer ſo much as a Lamb or Calf unto it! It is true, they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the Poor to it, ſuffering them to periſh with Hunger, Thirſt and Cold, rather than relieve them with that neceſſary Maintenance which God hath put into their Hands for them; they offer their own Bodies to it, expoſing them to Heats and Colds, to Dangers and Hazards both by Sea and Land, and all for Mony; yea, they offer their own Souls to it likewiſe, as a whole Burnt-Offering, giving them to lie ſcorching in Hell Flames to Eternity, and that upon no other Account but to get Mony: And tell me which are the greateſt Fools, and the moſt odious Idolaters, ſuch as offer Beaſts to the Sun and Flames, or ſuch as offer themſelves both Soul and Body to Dirt and Clay? We cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worſe, and by Conſequence the covetous Man to be the greateſt Idolater in the World, and that too only becauſe he is a covetous Man.

Moreover, is not Extortion and Oppreſſion a Sin? and yet we all know that it is the Love of Mony that is the only Cauſe of it. Is not Strife and Contention a Sin? whence

whence comes it but from our luſting after Mony, *Jac.* 4. 1. Is not Perjury a Sin? Is not Corruption of Juſtice a Sin? Is not Cheating and Couſenage a Sin? Is not Pride and Haughtineſs a Sin? Is not unrighteous Dealing betwixt Man and Man a Sin? Is not Theft and Robbery a Sin? Is not Treaſon and Rebellion a Sin? Are not all theſe Sins, and great ones too? But whence ſpring theſe poyſonous Fruits into the Lives of Men, but from the bitter Root of Covetouſneſs in their Hearts? It is the Love of Mony, that makes theſe Sins ſo rife among us: It is this that makes Men forſwear themſelves, and cozen others: It is this that oft-times makes Fathers ruin their Children, and Children to long for the Death of their Fathers: It is this that makes Neighbours go to Law, and Brethren themſelves to be at variance: It is this that makes Men ſtrive to over-reach each other, and to blind the Eyes of thoſe they deal with: It is this that hath cauſed ſome to murder others, and others to deſtroy themſelves. What ſhall I ſay more? There is no Impiety that can be committed againſt God, nor Injury that can be offered unto Men, but the Love of Mony hath been the Cauſe of it in others, and will be ſo in us unleſs it be timely prevented, and therefore it may well be termed the Root of all Evil of Sin.

And it being the Root from whence all the Evil of Sin ſprings, it muſt needs be the Root of the Evil of Puniſhment and Miſery too: Miſery and Puniſhment being the neceſſary Conſequent of Sin. Indeed this Sin carries its Miſery along with it, as *Seneca* himſelf ſaw by the mere Light of Nature, ſaying, *Nulla avaritia ſine pœnâ eſt, quamvis ſatis ſit ipſa pœnarum, No Avarice is without Puniſhment, tho it be it ſelf Puniſhment enough.* For what a Torment is it for a Man to be always thirſty, and never able to quench his Thirſt? Yet this is the Miſery of every covetous Man, whoſe thirſt after Mony can never be ſatisfied, and who is ſo deſirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with Comfort what he hath; loving Mony ſo well that he grudgeth himſelf the uſe of it. Hence the foreſaid Author obſerved, That *in nullum avarus bonus eſt, in ſe ipſam peſſimus. The covetous Man is good to none, but worſt of all to himſelf.* And as this is the natural Conſequent of this Sin in it ſelf, ſo is it the ordinary Puniſhment that God inflicts upon Men for it, not ſuffering them to take any Pleaſure in the uſe of what they love, *Eccleſ.* 6. 1, 2. And beſides that, what Cares and Fears, what Labours and Travels, what Dangers and Hazards doth the Love of Mony put Men upon? How

do

do they rack their Brains, and break their Reſt to get it; and when it is gotten, what Fears are they always in leſt they ſhould loſe it again? What Grief and Trouble do the poor Wretches undergo for every petty Loſs that befals them? So that every covetous Man is not only miſerable, but therefore miſerable becauſe covetous.

But if their Miſery be ſo great in this Life, how great will it be in that to come? Concerning which there are two things to be obſerved: Firſt, that the very having of Riches makes it very difficult to get to Heaven, *Matth.* 19. 23, 24, 25. *Luke* 16. 19, 22. Hence *Agar* was afraid of them, *Prov.* 30. 8. Neither do we ever read of any of the Patriarchs, Prophets, or the Saints recorded in Scripture, to have been guilty of this Sin, unleſs *Baruch*, who is reproved for it, *Jer.* 45. 5.

And as the having of Mony makes it difficult to get to Heaven, ſo the loving of it makes it impoſſible to keep out of Hell. For ſo long as a Man is covetous, he is liable to every Temptation, ready to catch at every Bait that the Devil throws before him; ſo that he is led by him as he pleaſeth, till at length he be utterly deſtroyed, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. And therefore the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere tells us, that the Covetous have no Inheritance in the Kingdom

dom of God, but the Wrath of God will moſt certainly fall upon them, *Eph.* 5. 5, 6. But the Wrath of God is the greateſt Evil of Puniſhment that it is poſſible for Men to bear: Indeed it is that which being once incenſed makes Hell-fire. And yet we ſee that the heat of our Love to Mony will enkindle the flames of God's Wrath againſt us, yea and ſuch flames too as will never be quenched, *Mark.* 9. 44. And ſo for the little ſeeming tranſient Pleaſure they take in getting, or keeping Mony now, they muſt live in Miſery and Contempt, in Shame and Torment for evermore.

Thus now we ſee that the Love of Mony will not only put us upon the Evil of Sin, but it will alſo bring the Evil of Puniſhment upon us; both which the Apoſtle here, *ver.* 9, 10. imputes to this Sin. And therefore he both well may and muſt be underſtood of both theſe ſorts of Evil, when he ſaith, that *the Love of Mony is the Root of all Evil*; which, the Premiſes conſider'd, I hope none can deny. And need I then heap up more Arguments to diſſuade Men from this Sin, and to prevail with them to leave doting upon the World and loving Mony? Is not this one Argument of it ſelf ſufficient? For is it poſſible for us to indulge our ſelves in this Sin, now we know it is the root of all Evil?

vil? And that if we ſtill love Mony, there is no Sin ſo great but we may fall into it, and no Miſery ſo heavy but it will fall upon us. Surely if this Conſideration will not prevail upon us to deſpiſe and contemn, rather than to love and deſire this World, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that ſo long as Men continue in this Sin, all Writing and Preaching will be in vain to them; and ſo will their Hearing be, their going to Church, their reading the Scriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them; all this will ſignifie nothing, this root of all Evil is ſtill within us, and it will bring forth its bitter fruit, do what we can. And therefore as ever we deſire to profit by what we hear, as ever we deſire to avoid any one Sin whatſoever, to know what happieſt means to eſcape either preſent Torment or eternal Miſery, as ever we deſire to be real Saints, and to manifeſt our ſelves to be ſo, to go to Heaven, and live with God and Chriſt for ever, let not our Affections be entangled any longer in the briars and thorns of this lower World, let us beware of loving Mony: *If riches encreaſe, let us not ſet our hearts upon them,* Pſal 62. 10. but ſcorn and deſpiſe them hereafter as much as ever heretofore we have deſired or loved them.

But

But I cannot, I dare not but in Charity believe and hope, that by this time my Readers are ſomething weaned from their doting upon this preſent World, and deſire to know how they may for the future get off their Affections from it, ſo as to have this root of all Evil extirpated, and quite plucked up from within them. I hope this is now the deſire of all, or at leaſt of moſt of them; and therefore I ſhall now endeavour to ſhew them how they may infallibly accompliſh and effect it. In order thereto,

1. Let ſuch Perſons often conſider with themſelves how unſuitable the things of this World are for Affections and Love, which was deſign'd only for the chiefeſt Good. When God implanted the Affection of Love within us, he did not intend it ſhould be the root of all Evil, but of all Good unto us; and therefore he did not give it us to place it fondly upon ſuch low and mean Objects as this World preſents unto us, but that we ſhould love Himſelf with all our Hearts and Souls, *Deut.* 6. 5. And ſurely he infinitely deſerves our Love more than ſuch Traſh can do.

2. Let them remember that ſo long as they love Mony, they may pretend what they pleaſe, they do not love God, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. nor Chriſt, *Matt.* 10. 37. *Luke* 14. 26.

26. and by conſequence they have no true Religion at all in them, *Jam.* 1. 27.

3. Let them often read and ſtudy our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, where he pronounces the meek and low, not the rich and mighty, to be bleſſed, *Mat.* 5. 3, 4. and weigh thoſe ſtrong and undeniable Arguments which he brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the World, nor trouble our Heads about the impertinent Concerns of this tranſient Life, *Matt.* 6. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

4. Let them labour to confirm and ſtrengthen their Truſt and Confidences on the Promiſes of God, who hath aſſured us, that if we love and fear him, he will take care of us, and provide all things neceſſary for us, *Matt.* 6. 33. This is the great Argument which the Apoſtle uſes, *Heb.* 13. 5, 6.

5. Let them remember that they are called to higher things than this World is able to afford them: The Chriſtian is an high and heavenly Calling; we are called by it, and invited to a Kingdom and eternal Glory, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 12. and therefore ought not to ſpend our time about ſuch low and paultry Traſh as Riches and Wealth.

6. Let them get above the World, let their Converſation be in Heaven, and then they will ſoon look down upon all things here below as beneath their Concern, *Vi-*

leſcunt

leſcunt temporalia, cum deſiderantur æterna, ſaid St. *Gregory*. He that ſeriouſly thinks upon and deſires Heaven, cannot but vilifie and deſpiſe Earth. Oh what Fools and Madmen do the bleſſed Angels, and the glorified Saints in Heaven, think us poor Mortals upon Earth to be, when they ſee us buſying our ſelves about getting a little refin'd Dirt, and in the mean while neglecting thoſe tranſcendent Glories which themſelves enjoy, altho' they be offer'd to us!

7. Let them never ſuffer the Vanity of all things here below to go out of their Minds; but remember ſtill, that get what they can, it is but Vanity and vexation of Spirit, as *Solomon* himſelf aſſerted upon his own Experience, tho' he be ſure had more than any of us are ever likely to enjoy. And let them not only often repeat the Words, but endeavour to get themſelves convinced throughly of the Truth of them, which their own Experiences, duly weighed and rightly applied, will ſoon do.

8. Let it be their daily Prayer to Almighty God, that he would take off their Affections from the World, and incline them to himſelf, as *David* did, ſaying, *Incline my heart to thy teſtimonies and not to covetouſneſs*, Pſal. 119. 36.

To all theſe means, let them add the conſtant and ſerious Conſideration of what they have

have here read, that the Love of Mony is the root of all Evil; aſſuring themſelves that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true by their own ſad and woful Experience; when they ſhall be ſtripp'd of their preſent Enjoyments, and ſo turn Bankrupts in another World, where they will be caſt into Priſon without ever having a farthing to relieve themſelves, or ſo much as a drop of water to cool their enflamed Tongues.

By theſe and ſuch like means none of us but may ſuppreſs the Love of Mony in us, which is the root of all Evil, and ſo avoid or prevent all the Evil which otherwiſe will proceed from it. Whether any of my Readers will be perſuaded to uſe theſe means or no, I know not; however let me tell them, that if they are loath to ſtrive to get their Affections deaden'd to the World, it is an infallible ſign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and ſeed of all manner of Evil remains in them; nor can it be expected they will be perſuaded to any one Duty whatſoever, until they are firſt prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their Luſts and Affections to the things of this World. For ſo long as thoſe are predominant within us, no Grace whatſoever can be exerted, nor Duty performed, nor any Sin avoided by us.

But

But oh how happy would it be, if it ſhould pleaſe the moſt high God to ſet what I have here ſaid ſo home upon any, as to induce them to ſet themſelves ſeriouſly for the future, to the eradicating or rooting up this Love of Mony out of their Hearts! What a holy, what a bleſſed, what a peculiar People ſhould we then be, and how zealous of good works! Then we ſhould take all Opportunities of performing our Devotions to Almighty God; then we ſhould have as many at the Sacrament, as at a Sermon; then our Churches would be filled all the Week, as well as on *Sundays*, and the Eternal God conſtantly worſhipped with Reverence and godly Fear; then we would take delight in cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, and relieving the Oppreſſed: Then there would be no ſuch thing as Cheating and Couſenage, as Lying and Perjury, as Strife and Contention amongſt us. But we ſhould all walk hand in hand together in the ways of Piety, Juſtice, and Charity upon Earth, until at length we ſhall come to Heaven, where we ſhall be ſo far from loving or deſiring Mony, that we ſhall account it as it is, even droſs and dirt; where our Affections ſhall be wholly taken up with the Contemplation of the chiefeſt Good, and we ſhall ſolace our ſelves in the Enjoyment of his Perfections for evermore.

THOUGHTS

UPON

WORLDLY RICHES.

SECT. II.

TImothy after his Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, being found to be a Man of great Parts, Learning, and Piety, and ſo every way qualified for the Work of the Miniſtry, St. *Paul*, who had planted a Church at *Epheſus*, the Metropolis or chief City of all *Aſia*, left him to dreſs and propagate it, after his departure from it, giving him Power to ordain Elders or Prieſts, and to viſit and exerciſe Juriſdiction over them, to ſee they did not teach falſe Doctrines, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. That they be unblamable in their Lives and Converſations, 1 *Tim.* 5. 7. and to exerciſe Authority over them, in caſe

they be otherwiſe, 1 *Tim* 5. 19. And therefore it cannot in reaſon but be acknowledged that *Timothy* was the Biſhop, Superintendent, or Viſiter of all the *Aſian* Churches, as he was always aſſerted to have been by the Fathers of the Primitive Church, as *Euſebius* reports, ſaying, Τιμόθεον δ' ἐν ἐφέσῳ παροικίας ἱστορεῖ πρῶτον τῶν ἐπισκοπῶν εἰληχέναι, that *Timothy* is reported to have been the firſt Biſhop of the Province of *Epheſus*. Be ſure he had the overſight of all the Churches that were planted there, and not only in *Epheſus* it ſelf, but likewiſe in all *Aſia*, which was ſubject then to his Eccleſiaſtical Power and Juriſdiction.

And hence it is that the Apoſtle St. *Paul* in his firſt Epiſtle to him, gives him Directions how to manage ſo great a Work, and to diſcharge ſo great a Truſt as was committed to him, both as Biſhop and Prieſt; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewiſe how to preach himſelf the Goſpel of Chriſt. And having ſpent the whole Epiſtle in Directions of this ſort, in the cloſe of it, as it were at the foot of the Epiſtle, he ſubjoins one general Caution to be conſtantly obſerved by him: *Charge them that are rich*, &c. Which words, though firſt directed to *Timothy*, were in him intended for all ſucceeding Mini-

Miniſters, and Preachers of the Goſpel; ſuch I mean who are ſolemnly ordained and ſet apart for this Work. We are all obliged to obſerve the Command which is here laid upon us, as without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: For ſo long as their Minds are ſet altogether upon Riches, and the things of this World, we may preach our hearts out, before we can ever perſuade them to mind Heaven and eternal Happineſs in good earneſt This St. *Paul* knew well enough, and therefore hath left this not only as his Advice and Counſel, but as a ſtrict Command and Duty incumbent upon the Preachers of the Goſpel in all Ages, that they *charge them that are rich*, &c. where it may be obſerv'd in the firſt place, how we are expreſly enjoined to *charge them that are rich*, &c. a word much to be obſerved. The Apoſtle doth not ſay, deſire, beſeech, counſel, or admoniſh, the Rich; but παραγγελλε τοις πλουσιοις, charge and command them that are rich. The word properly ſignifies ſuch a Charge as the Judges at an Aſſize or Seſſions make in the King's Name, enjoining his Subjects to obſerve the eſtabliſhed Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom. And ſo the word is always uſed in Scripture for the ſtricteſt way of commanding any thing to be obſerved

ſerved or done, as *Acts* 5. 28. οὐ παραγγελίᾳ παρηγγείλαμεν ὑμῖν; *Did not we ſtraitly command you. Luc.* 5. 14. παρήγγειλε αὐτῷ. *He charged him to tell no man.* Thus therefore it is that we are here enjoined to charge the Rich in the Name of the King of Kings, not to be high minded, nor to truſt in uncertain Riches, &c.

And this is the proper Notion, and the only true way of preaching the Word of God; which therefore in Scripture is ordinarily expreſſed by the Word κηρύσσειν, which properly ſignifies to publiſh or proclaim as Heralds do, the Will and Pleaſure of the Prince, and in his Name to command the People to obſerve it. Thus we are enjoined to preach the Word of God, by publiſhing his Will and Pleaſure to Men; charging them in his Name, to obey and practiſe it. For we come not to them in our own Names, but in his that created and redeemed them; and therefore, altho' we neither have, nor pretend to any Power or Authority over them, from our ſelves; yet by vertue of the Commiſſion which we have received from the univerſal and ſupreme Monarch of the World, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound, to charge and enjoin all in his Name, to obſerve what he hath commanded them. Inſomuch, that although we pretend not to divine

divine Inſpiration, or immediate Revelations from God, ſuch as the Prophets had; yet we, preaching the ſame Word which they did, may, and often ought to uſe the ſame Authority which they uſed, ſaying, as they did, *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts:* For whatſoever is written in the Scriptures, is as certainly God's Word now, as it was when firſt inſpired or revealed to them. And therefore it cannot be denied, but that we have as much Power to charge upon all, the Obſervation of what is there written, as they ever had, we being ſent to preach and proclaim the Will of God unto all, by the ſame Perſon as they were. Hence it is that the Apoſtle, in the Name of God, commands *Titus*, and in him all ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel, to ſpeak or preach the Word of God, to exhort and rebuke with all Authority, *Tit.* 2. 15. From whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our Duty to preach with Authority, as thoſe who have received Power from God, to make known his Will and Pleaſure to all Men; or as the Apoſtle here expreſly words it, to *charge them not to be high minded*, and the like.

But this I fear may be a very ungrateful Subject to many, and therefore I ſhould not have inſiſted ſo long upon it, but that there is a kind of neceſſity for it. For I

verily believe, that the Non-obſervance of this, hath been, and ſtill is, the principal Reaſon why People receive ſo little benefit by hearing of Sermons, as they uſually do. For they look upon Sermons only as popular Diſcourſes, rehears'd by one of their Fellow-Creatures, which they may cenſure, approve or reject, as themſelves ſee good. And we our ſelves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at leaſt remiſs, in this particular; in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long Harangue or Oration concerning ſome point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical Divinity, and uſe only ſome moral Perſuaſions to preſs upon our Auditors the obſervance of what we ſay, without interpoſing, or exerciſing the Authority which is committed to us, ſo as to charge them in the Name of the moſt High God, to obſerve and practiſe what we declare and prove unto them to be his Will, and by conſequence their Duty. But for my own part, did I think that Preaching conſiſted only in explaining ſome point in Divinity, and uſing only moral Arguments to perſuade Men to perform their Duty to God and Man, I ſhould not think it worth my while to do it, becauſe I could not expect to do any good at all by it. For all the moral Arguments in the World, can never be ſo ſtrong to draw us from Sin, as

our

our own natural Corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon Men, either by our Logick or Rhetorick; but our Arguments muſt be fetched from on high, even from the eternal God himſelf, or elſe they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We muſt charge and command them in God's Name, or elſe we had as good ſay nothing.

It is true, did we, who preach God's Word, propoſe nothing elſe to our ſelves, but to tickle Mens ears, and pleaſe their fancies and ſo to ingratiate our ſelves into their love and favour, it would be eaſie to entertain them with Diſcourſes of another nature, ſtuffed with ſuch fine Words, quaint Phraſes, and high Notions, as would be very pleaſing, and acceptable unto them. But I muſt take leave to ſay, that we dare not do it; for we know, that as our Auditors muſt give an account of their hearing, ſo it is not long before we alſo muſt give an account of our preaching too; for ſo God himſelf hath told us before-hand by his Apoſtle, *Heb.* 13. 17. But how ſhall we be able to look the eternal God in the face, yea, or to look our Auditors in the face at that time, if inſtead of charging their Duty upon them, in order to their eternal Salvation, we ſhould put them off with gene-

ral Diſcourſes, which ſignifie nothing, only to pleaſe and gratifie them whilſt we remain with them; no, we dare not do it, and therefore I wiſh Men would not expect it from us; for we muſt not hazard our own eternal Salvation, to gain their temporal favour or applauſe. And therefore, ſeeing God hath been pleaſed to entruſt us ſo far with Mens Souls, as to direct them in the way to eternal Life, howſoever they reſent it, we are bound in Duty, both to God, to them, and our ſelves, to deal plainly with them, and to uſe the Authority which he hath here committed to us, where he hath expreſly commanded us in his Name, to *charge them that are rich in this world*, &c.

Where I deſire the Reader to obſerve in the next place, that we of the Clergy are not only empower'd to charge the poorer, or meaner ſort of People, who by reaſon of their extream poverty and want, may ſeem inferior to us, but even rich Men too; *Charge them*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that are rich in this world.* And the Reaſon is, becauſe we come unto them in his Name, who gives them all the Riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when he himſelf pleaſeth; ſo that he can make the Poor Rich, and the Rich Poor, when he pleaſeth, and therefore the Poor

and

and Rich are all alike to him; his Power and Authority is the ſame over both; and therefore we, coming in his Name, are ordered to make no diſtinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we are particularly commanded to *charge them that are rich.*

Which is the next thing to be conſidered in theſe Words, even whom the Apoſtle means by them that *are rich in this World*? Which is a Queſtion that needs a ſerious Reſolution. For many Men, not thinking themſelves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence, that they are not to be reckoned amongſt thoſe whom the Apoſtle here calls Rich in this World. But whatſoever they may think of themſelves, I believe there are but few, except the very Poor, who in a Scripture ſenſe are not rich Men. For whatſoever any have over and above their neceſſary maintenance, that the Scriptures call Riches, as is plain from *Agar*'s Wiſh, *Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me*, Prov. 30 8. From whence it is eaſie to obſerve, that as nothing but the want of convenient Food is Poverty; ſo whatſoever a Man hath over and above his convenient or neceſſary Food, is properly his Riches; and ſo he that hath it, is in a Scripture ſenſe a rich Man, who is therefore called here

here in my Text πλούσιος, *quaſi* πολυούσιος, one that hath much Subſtance, or more than he hath neceſſary occaſion for. And therefore, although ſome may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may be juſtly reckoned in the number of the rich Men here ſpoken of, at leaſt all ſuch, as by the Bleſſing of God, have not only what is neceſſary for their preſent maintenance, but likewiſe ſomething to ſpare, and ſo may all come under the notion of thoſe whom we are here commanded to charge not to be high minded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches, *&c.*

Having thus conſidered the Act which we are here commanded to exert, and the Object, the Rich of this World, we are now to conſider the Subject matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them; but that is here expreſly ſet down in ſeveral Particulars, all which I ſhall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

1. That they *be not high minded*; a neceſſary Caution for rich Men. For Riches are very apt to puff Men up with vain and fooliſh Conceits of themſelves, ſo as to think themſelves to be ſo much better, by how much they are richer than other People; but this is a grand miſtake, which we are here enjoined to uſe the utmoſt

moſt of our power and skill to rectifie, by *charging them that are rich not to be high minded*; that is, not to think highly and proudly of themſelves, becauſe they are richer or wealthier than other Men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly minded in the enjoyment of all temporal Bleſſings, as if they enjoyed nothing; as conſidering, 1. how much ſoever they have, they are no way really the better for it.

1. Not in their Souls; they are never the wiſer nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God by their being Rich, *Eccleſ.* 9. 1. *Job* 34. 19.

2. Nor in their Bodies; they are never the ſtronger, nor healthier, nor freer from pain and trouble, nor yet longer lived than others.

3. Nor in their Minds; their Conſciences are never the quieter, their Hearts never the freer from cares and fears, neither can they ſleep better than other People, *Eccleſ* 5. 12.

4. Nor yet in their Eſtate and Condition.

1. Not in this Life. For Riches can never ſatisfie them, nor by conſequence make them happy; but they may ſtill be as miſerable in the enjoyment, as in the want of all things, *Eccleſ.* 5. 11.

2. Nor

2. Nor yet in the Life to come; they are never the nearer Heaven, by being higher upon Earth; their Gold and Silver can never purchaſe an Inheritance for them in the Land of *Canaan*, *Jac.* 2. 5.

2. They are ſo far from being better, that they are rather much worſe for their having abundance here below.

1. They have more Temptations to Sin, to Luxury, to Covetouſneſs, to the love of this World, to the neglect of their Duty to God, to Pride and Self-conceitedneſs, to Security and Preſumption, *Luke* 12. 19.

2. It is harder for them to get to Heaven, than it is for others; and by conſequence the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miſerable for ever, *Matt.* 19. 23. Whence our Saviour himſelf denounceth a Woe upon them that are Rich, *Luke* 6. 24. and St. *James* bids them *weep and howl for their miſeries*, Jac. 5. 1. And therefore adviſes us to rejoice rather at Poverty than Riches, *Jac.* 1. 9, 10. Now theſe things being conſidered, as ſpoken by God himſelf, none can deny but that the rich are moſt certainly in a worſe condition than the Poor; and by conſequence, that Men have no cauſe to be proud, or high minded, nor to glory in their riches, *Jer.* 9. 23. And therefore whatſoever outward

ward Bleſſings God hath beſtowed upon us, *Let us not be high minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20.

2. Nor truſt in uncertain Riches, which I confeſs is a very hard Leſſon for a rich Man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have Riches, and not to truſt in them, as our Saviour himſelf intimates, in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely ſevered, *Mark* 10. 23, 24. But certainly it is altogether as fooliſh a thing to truſt in Riches, as it is to be proud of them. For,

1. They of themſelves can ſtand us in no ſtead, they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good; they cannot of themſelves either feed us, or cloath us, or refreſh us, or be any ways advantageous to us, without God's Bleſſing, *Pro.* 11. 4. How much leſs can they be able to deliver us from wrath to come. No, we may take it for a certain truth, our Riches may much further our eternal Miſery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future Happineſs.

2. If we truſt in them, be ſure they'll fail us, and bring us into Miſery and Deſolation, for to truſt in any thing but God, is certainly one of the higheſt Sins we can be guilty of, it is in plain terms Idolatry; and therefore *He that truſteth in riches, is*

ſure

ſure to fall, Prov. 11. 28. For this is to deny God, *Job* 31. 24, 25, 28.

3. They are but uncertain Riches, *they make themſelves wings and fly away*, Prov. 23. 5. They are in continual motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one ſtay. So that you are never ſure of keeping them one day; and what reaſon then can we have to truſt on them? Eſpecially conſidering, that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty it ſelf, as the word here ſignifies, *Truſt not in the uncertainty of riches.*

But in the living God; He, he is to be the only Object of our Truſt, whether we have, or have not any thing elſe to truſt on; or to ſpeak more properly, there is nothing that we can upon good Grounds make our truſt and confidence, but only him, who governs, and diſpoſeth of all things, according to his own pleaſure. So that it is he, and he alone that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our Wit or Policy, it is not our Strength or Induſtry, it is not our trading and trafficking in the World, it is none but God that giveth us what we have, *Deut.* 8. 18. *Prov.* 10. 22. And as it is he that maketh Men rich, ſo he can make them poor again, when he himſelf pleaſeth; and they have cauſe to

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fear he will do ſo too, unleſs they obſerve what is here charged upon them.

There are four Duties ſtill behind, which we are here commanded to charge all thoſe who are rich to obſerve.

1. That *they do good.* In treating of which I might ſhew the ſeveral Qualifications required to the making up of an Action good, as that the Matter of it muſt be good, as commanded, or at leaſt allowed by God; that the Manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obediently, underſtandingly, willingly, chearfully, humbly, and ſincerely; and that the End be good too, ſo as that it be directed ultimately to the Glory of God. But not to inſiſt upon that now, I ſhall only conſider what kind of good Works the Rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich Men. And they are two, Works of Piety, and Works of Charity.

1. They are here commanded to do works of Piety; where by works of Piety I mean not their loving and fearing, and honouring of God, nor yet their praying to him, their hearing his Word, or praiſing his Name, for ſuch works of Piety as theſe are, the pooreſt as well as the richeſt Perſons amongſt us are bound to do; whereas the Apoſtle here ſpeaks only

ly of ſuch works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account becauſe they are ſo. And therefore by works of Piety here, I underſtand ſuch works as tend to the Honour of his Name, to the Performance of Worſhip and Homage to him, to the Encouragement of his Miniſters, the propagating of his Goſpel, and the Converſion of Sinners to him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmoſt of their Power, out of the Eſtates which for theſe Purpoſes he hath entruſted with them. For thus they are expreſly commanded to honour the Lord with all their Subſtance, or Riches, and with the Firſt-Fruits of all their Increaſe, *Prov.* 3. 9. And the reaſon is, becauſe God is the univerſal Proprietor, the Head Landlord of all the World, and we have nothing but what we hold under him; neither are we any more than Tenants at will to him, who may fine us at his own Pleaſure, or throw us out of Poſſeſſion whenſoever he ſees good. Now leſt we ſhould forget this, even upon what Tenure it is that we hold our Eſtates, God hath enjoyned us to pay him, as it were, a Quit-rent, or Tribute out of what we poſſeſs, as an Acknowledgement that it is by his Favour and Bleſſing alone that we do poſſeſs it. So that whatſoever we do, or are able

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to offer to him, is but a due Debt which we owe him, which if we neglect to pay him, we loſe our Tenure, and forfeit what we have to the Lord of the Manor, the ſupreme Poſſeſſor of the World. Hence it is, that in all Ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due ſenſe of God upon their Hearts, were always very careful to pay this their Homage unto God; inſomuch that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious Uſe, wherein to teſtifie their Acknowledgment of God's Dominion over them, and his Right and Propriety in what they had. A notable Inſtance whereof we have in the Children of *Iſrael*; for when the Tabernacle was to be built for the Service and Worſhip of God, they were ſo far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they preſently brought more than could be uſed in the building of it, *Exod* 36. 5, 6, 7. So it was too in the building of the Temple, which *David*, and the Chiefs or Nobles of *Iſrael*, made great Preparations for, 1 *Chron.* 29. 6, 7, 8. And that they did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and Giver of all, is plain from the following words, *Ver.* 11, 12, 13. The ſame was alſo obſerved in the building of the ſecond Temple, as the raiſing the firſt out of its Rubbiſh, wherein it had

lain for many Years. And as for Chriſtians, I need not tell you how forward thoſe who have been truly pious, have always been in doing ſuch works of Piety, ſeeing moſt of the Churches in Chriſtendom, or be ſure in this Nation, have been erected by particular Perſons. And it is very obſervable, that the more eminent any Place or Age hath been for Piety and Devotion, the more pious works have been always done in it, for the Service and Worſhip of Almighty God; which plainly ſhews, that where ſuch works are wanting, whatſoever Pretences they may make, there is no ſuch thing as true Piety, and the Fear of God. And therefore, as ever we deſire to manifeſt our ſelves to be what we profeſs, true Chriſtians indeed, Men fearing God, and hating Covetouſneſs, we muſt take all Opportunities to expreſs our Thankfulneſs unto God for what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to his Service and Honour.

2. Beſides theſe works of Piety towards God, the Rich are enjoined alſo works of Charity towards the Poor, which though they have an immediate reference to the Poor, yet God looks upon them as given to himſelf, *Prov.* 14. 31. *Ch.* 19. 17. *Mat.* 25. 40. Hence it is that God accepts of ſuch works as theſe alſo, for part of the Tribute

Tribute which we owe him; whereby we acknowledge the Receipt of what we have from him, and expreſs our Thankfulneſs unto him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a Bleſſing upon what we have, nor that it ſhould be really good to us. *For*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *every Creature of God is good, if it be received with Thankſgiving*, not elſe, 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. But no Thankſgiving is acceptable but that which is expreſſed by works as well as words. And therefore it is neceſſary for us to pay this Duty and Service to God, out of what we have, in order to the cleanſing and ſanctifying the Reſidue of our Eſtates unto us, without which we have not the lawful uſe of what we poſſeſs; but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour himſelf intimates, *Luke* 11. 41. A thing much to be conſidered. For I verily believe that the great reaſon why ſo many Eſtates are blaſted ſo ſoon, and brought to nothing amongſt us, is becauſe Men do not render unto God his Duty and Tribute out of what they have, and therefore it is no wonder that God in his Providence turns them out of Poſſeſſion, and gives their Eſtates to other Perſons, who ſhall be better Tenants to him, and be careful to pay him the Duties which he requires of them. And

therefore, in order to Mens ſecuring their Eſtates to themſelves and Poſterity, it is abſolutely neceſſary that they obſerve the Duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all that are rich in this World, even to do good with what they have, and not only ſo, but

2. To be *rich* too *in good works*; that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their Riches, ſo as to proportion their good works to the Riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the Apoſtle's Direction, 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. Thus, in the place before quoted, *Luc.* 11. 41. where our Saviour bids the Phariſees to give Alms of ſuch things as they have, his words are τὰ ἐνόντα δότε τὴν ἐλεημοσυνὴν, Give Alms as much as ye are able, for ſo the words properly ſignifie. And verily whatſoever we do, unleſs it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all: For we muſt not think to compound with him. When he hath given us all we have, he expects that we render all that he requires of us, that is, as much as we are able to pay unto him. As if a Man owes you Mony, you will not accept of part inſtead of the whole; ſo neither will God from us; we all owe him as much as we are able to devote to his Service

Service and Honour, and we muſt not think to put him off with part of it: For he reckons that he receives nothing from us, unleſs it be proportionable to what he hath beſtowed upon us. But how little ſoever it is that we give or offer to him, if it be but anſwerable to our Eſtates, it will be accepted by him. This our Saviour himſelf hath aſſured us of, *Mark* 12. 43, 44. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the pooreſt Perſon whatſoever but may be as rich in good works as the richeſt, becauſe God doth not meaſure the goodneſs of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our Eſtates: So that he that gives a penny may do as good a work as he that gives a pound, yea, and a better too, becauſe his may be as much as he is able, whereas the other's is not. I wiſh all Men would ſeriouſly weigh and conſider this, leſt otherwiſe they go out of the World without ever having done one good work in it: For we may aſſure our ſelves, he that is not thus rich in good works, doth no good at all with his Riches.

But it is farther to be conſidered here, that this Expreſſion, *rich in good works*, implies that good works are indeed our principal Riches; and that Men muſt not

compute their Riches ſo much from what they have, as from what they give and devote God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands; but what we give is ours in God's hands, and he acknowledgeth himſelf our Debtor for it, in that he tells us that we lend it to him, and promiſeth to pay it us again, *Prov.* 19. 17. And therefore they who caſt up their Accounts to know how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their Houſes and Lands that are made over to them, not yet upon what is owing to them by Men; but ſhould reckon only upon what they have given to pious or charitable Uſes, upon what Treaſure they have laid up in Heaven. For whatſoever they may think at preſent, I dare aſſure them, that will be found to be their only Riches another day. And therefore if any one deſires to be rich indeed, let him take my Advice, do what good he can with the Riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough: For this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he muſt likewiſe obſerve what follows, to be

3. *Ready to diſtribute*; that is, ready upon all Occaſions to pay his Tribute unto God, whenſoever he in his Providence calls for it; taking all Opportunities of doing

ing good, and glad when he can find them, *Gal.* 6. 10. Thus therefore whenſoever any Opportunities preſent themſelves of expreſſing our thankfulneſs unto God, by works either of Piety or Charity, whatſoever other Buſineſſes may be neglected, we muſt be ſure to lay hold on that. For I dare ſay, that there is none but will grant me that there is all the reaſon in the World that God ſhould be ſerved in the firſt place, and that he ſhould have the firſt Fruits of all our Encreaſe, *Prov.* 3. 9. *Exod.* 23. 19. *Deut.* 26. 2. And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of Piety towards God, and of Charity to the Poor, or as the Scripture calls them in general good works, are always to be done in the firſt place; and whatſoever other works may be omitted, be ſure they muſt not. But we ought ſtill to be as ready to pay our Duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from him, as ready to give as to receive; and by conſequence as Men let no Opportunities ſlip wherein they can encreaſe their Eſtates, they are much leſs to let any Opportunities paſs wherein they can any way improve their Eſtates for God's Glory and others Good; but they ought to be ready upon all Occaſions to diſtri-

bute what they can upon charitable and pious Uſes.

4. *Willing to communicate*; as we muſt do it with a ready hand, ſo we muſt do it with a willing Heart too. Thus we are enjoined to ſerve God willingly, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. and chearfully, 2 *Cor.* 9. 6, 7. Indeed God accepts of none but Free-will-Offerings. If we be not as willing to do good Works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be confident God will never accept of them. And therefore in plain Terms, if any would be rich in good works as becometh Chriſtians, and as it is our Intereſt to be; they muſt not ſtay till they be compelled, perſuaded, or intreated by others to do them; but they muſt ſet upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due ſenſe of their conſtant Dependance upon him, and manifold obligations to him; yea, ſo as to take pleaſure in nothing in the World ſo much as in paying their Reſpects and Service to Almighty God, 1 *Chron.* 29. 14, 15, 17.

Now to encourage the Rich to employ their Eſtates thus in doing good, the Apoſtle adds in the laſt place, that this is the way to *lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life.* A ſtrange Expreſſion!

preſſion! yea ſuch a one, that had not St. *Paul* himſelf ſpoke it, ſome would have been apt to have excepted againſt it for an Error or Miſtake. What, good Works the Foundation of eternal Life? No, that is not the meaning of it; but that good works are the Foundation of that bleſſed Sentence which they ſhall receive who are made Partakers of eternal Life, as is plain from our Saviour's own Words, *Matt.* 25. 34, 35, 36.

And verily although there be no ſuch intrinſick value in good Works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them; yet nothing can be more certain, than that God of his infinite Mercy in Jeſus Chriſt will ſo accept of them as to reward us for them in the World to come. For this our Saviour himſelf doth clearly intimate to us, in the Place before quoted, as alſo, *Matt.* 6. 20. *Luke* 12. 33. *Luke* 16. 9. that is, diſtribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful Riches you have in this World in ſuch a way as is moſt pleaſing and acceptable unto God, that ſo he may be your Friend, and receive you into everlaſting Habitations, when theſe tranſient and unſtable Riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to obſerve, that to do good with

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what we have is the only way whereby to improve our Eſtates for our own good, ſo as to be the better for them both in this and alſo in the World to come. The Rabbins have a good Saying, that מלח ממון צדקה good Works are the Salt of Riches, that which preſerves them from Corruption, and makes them ſavoury and acceptable unto God, as alſo uſeful and profitable to the Owners. Unleſs we do good with our Eſtates, we forfeit our Title to them by the Non-payment of the Rent-charge which God hath reſerved to himſelf upon them; and therefore we may juſtly expect every moment to be caſt out of Poſſeſſion; or howſoever though he may forbear us a while, yea ſo long as we are in this World, what good, what benefit, what comfort ſhall we have of our Eſtates in the World to come? Certainly no more than the rich Man in the Goſpel had, when he lay ſcorching in Hell-fire, and had not ſo much as a drop of water to cool his enflamed Tongue. Whereas on the other ſide, if we do good with our Eſtates, if we devote them to the Service of God, and to the Relief of the Poor, by this means we ſhall not only ſecure the Poſſeſſion of them to our ſelves here, but ſhall alſo receive comfort and benefit from them in the World to come;

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ſo that our Eſtates will not die with us, but we ſhall receive benefit by them, and have cauſe to bleſs God for them unto all Eternity: The Apoſtle himſelf aſſuring us, that by this means we ſhall *lay up for ourſelves a good foundation for the time to come, ſo as to hold on eternal life.*

This one Argument being duly weighed, I hope I need not uſe any more to perſuade Men to do good with what they have, and to make the beſt Uſe of it they can. For I know I write to Chriſtians, at leaſt to ſuch as profeſs themſelves to be ſo; and therefore to ſuch as believe there is another World beſides this we live in, and by conſequence that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have ſhewn, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right Improvement of what God hath entruſted with us in this World. What then do the generality of Men mean to be ſo ſlack and remiſs in laying hold on all opportunities of doing Good! What, do they think it poſſible to loſe any thing they do for God! or do they think it poſſible to employ their Eſtates better than for his Service and Honour who gave them to us! I cannot believe any think ſo; and therefore muſt needs adviſe the Rich again and again not to lay up their Talent in a Napkin; but to uſe

uſe their Eſtates to the beſt Advantage for God and their own Souls, that ſo when they go from hence into the other World, they may be received into eternal Glory, with a *Well done good and faithful ſervants, enter you into your Maſter's joy.*

But fearing leſt theſe moral Perſuaſions may not prevail ſo much upon my Readers as I deſire they might, they muſt give me leave farther to tell them, that I am here commanded to *charge them that are rich in this world, to be rich* alſo *in good works:* And therefore ſeeing, as I have ſhewn, there are few but who in a Scripture-ſenſe are rich in this World, in obedience to this Command which here is laid upon me, in the Name of the moſt high God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God himſelf, he wills and requires all thoſe whom he hath bleſſed with Riches in this World, that *they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches,* but that they put their whole Truſt and Confidence only in the Living God, whoſe all things are, and who gives us whatſoever we have: That they do good with what he hath put into their hands, laying it out upon Works of Piety towards him, and of Charity to the Poor, that his Worſhip may be decently performed, and

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the Poor liberally relieved; that they be *rich in good works,* ſtriving to excel each other in doing good in their Generation; that they be *ready* every moment *to diſtribute,* and always *willing to communicate* to every good Work, wherein they can pay their Homage and expreſs their Thankfulneſs to him for what they have.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

UPON

SELF-DENYAL.

THE moſt glorious Sight queſtionleſs that was ever to be ſeen upon the face of the Earth, was to ſee the Son of God here, to ſee the Supreme Being and Governour of the World here; to ſee the Creator of all Things converſing here with his own Creatures; to ſee God himſelf with the Nature, and in the ſhape of Man, walking about upon the Surface of the Earth; and diſcourſing with ſilly Mortals here; and that with ſo much Majeſty and Humility mixed together, that every Expreſſion might ſeem a demonſtration that he was both God and Man. It is true, we were not ſo happy as to ſee this bleſſed Sight, how-

howſoever, it is our Happineſs that we have heard of it, and have it ſo exactly deſcribed to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had ſeen it: Yea, our Saviour himſelf hath pronounced thoſe in a peculiar manner bleſſed, *who have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, John 20. 29. that is, who never ſaw Chriſt in the Manger, nor in the Temple, who never ſaw him proſtrate before his Father in the Garden, nor faſtned by Men unto his Croſs; who never ſaw him preaching the Goſpel, nor working Miracles to confirm it; who never ſaw him before his Paſſion, nor after his Reſurrection, and yet do as firmly believe whatſoever is recorded of him, as if they had ſeen it with their Eyes. Such Perſons our bleſſed Saviour himſelf aſſerts to be truly bleſſed, as having ſuch a Faith as is the Subſtance of things hoped for, and *the evidence of things not ſeen*, Heb. 11. 1.

Hence therefore, although we lived not in our Saviour's Time, and therefore ſaw him not do as never Man did, nor heard him ſpeak as never Man ſpake, we may notwithſtanding be as bleſſed, or rather more bleſſed than they that did. If we do but give credit to what is aſſerted of him, and receive and believe what is repreſented to us in his Holy Goſpels, where

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by Faith we may ſtill ſee him working Miracles, and hear him declaring his Will and Pleaſure to his Diſciples, as really as if we had then been by him. And therefore whatſoever we read in the Goſpel that he ſpake, we are to hearken as diligently to it, as if we heard him ſpeak it with our own Ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had received it from his own Mouth: for ſo we do, though not immediately, yet by the infallible Pen of them that did ſo. And ſeeing he never ſpake in vain, or to no purpoſe, nor ſuffered an idle or ſuperfluous Word to proceed out of his Sacred and Divine Mouth; whatſoever he aſſerted, we are to look upon as neceſſary to be believed, becauſe he aſſerted it. And whatſoever he commanded, we are to look upon as neceſſary to be obſerved, becauſe he hath commanded it; for we muſt not think that his Aſſertions are ſo frivolous, or his Commands ſo impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other or no: No, if we expect to be juſtified and ſaved by him, he expects to be believed and obeyed by us, without which he will not look upon us as his Diſciples, nor by conſequence as Chriſtians, but Strangers and Aliens to him, whatſoever our Profeſſions and Pretences are.

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It is true, we live in an Age wherein Chriſtianity in the general Notion of it is highly courted, all Sects and Parties amongſt us making their Pretences to it, whatſoever Opinions or Circumſtances they differ in, be ſure they all agree in the external Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, and by conſequence in the acknowledgment that they ought to be Chriſtians indeed. But I fear that Men are generally miſtaken about the notion of true Chriſtianity, not thinking it to be ſo high and divine a thing as really it is; for if they had true and clear conceptions of it, they would never fancy themſelves to be Chriſtians, upon ſuch low and pitiful grounds as uſually they do, making as if Chriſtianity conſiſted in nothing elſe, but in the external performance of ſome few particular Duties, and in adhering to them that profeſs it; whereas Chriſtianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature, than ſuch would have it; inſomuch, that did we but rightly underſtand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, ſo as to reſolve for the future to the utmoſt of our power to live up to it, to which could I be an inſtrument of perſuading any, how happy ſhould I think my ſelf? Howſoever it is my Duty to endeavour it, and for that purpoſe I ſhall now clear up the true noti-

on of Chriſtianity, that we may know, not what it is to be Profeſſors and Pretenders to Chriſtianity, but what it is to be real Chriſtians, and true Diſciples of Chriſt Jeſus, ſuch as Chriſt will own for his in another World.

Now to know whom Chriſt will accept for his Diſciples, our only way is to conſult Chriſt himſelf, and to conſider what it is that he requires of thoſe that follow him, in order to be his Diſciples; a thing as eaſily underſtood, as it is generally diſregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Chriſt requires and enjoins all thoſe that would be his Diſciples, to obſerve not only ſome few, but all the Commands that he hath laid upon us. *Ye are my friends*, ſaith he, *and therefore my Diſciples, if ye do whatſoever I command you*, Joh. 15. 14. So that unleſs we do whatſoever he commands us, we are ſo far from being his Diſciples, that we are indeed his Enemies. Nay, they that would be his Diſciples, muſt excel and ſurpaſs all others in Virtue and good Works. *Herein*, ſaith he, *is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples*, Joh 15. 8. yea, and continue in them too, *Joh.* 8. 31. He tells us alſo, that they that would be his Diſciples, *muſt love him above all things*, or rather, hate

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all things in compariſon of him, *Luke* 14. 26. And *that they love one another, as he hath loved them*, John 13. 35. To name no more; read but St. *Matt.* 16. 24. and there you may ſee what it is to be a Chriſtian indeed, or what it is that Chriſt requires of thoſe who would be his Diſciples: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs, and follow me.* Did we but underſtand the true Meaning of theſe Words, and order our Converſations accordingly, we ſhould both know what it is to be true Chriſtians, and really be ſo our ſelves. For I think there is nothing that Chriſt requires of thoſe who deſire to be his Diſciples, but we ſhould perform it, could we but obſerve what is here commanded; which that we may all do, I ſhall endeavour to give the true Meaning of them, and of every particular in them, as they lie in order.

Firſt, ſaith he, *If any man will come after me*, that is, If any Man will be my Diſciple; for Maſters ye know uſe to go before, Scholars and Diſciples to follow after. And our Saviour here ſpeaks of himſelf under the notion of a Maſter, that hath Diſciples coming after him, and ſaith, that if any one would be one of his Diſciples, ſo as to go after him, *he muſt deny himſelf, take up his croſs and follow him.*

So that here are three things which our Bleſſed Saviour requires of thoſe that would be his Diſciples, and by conſequence of us who profeſs to be ſo; for I dare ſay, there is none of us but deſires to be a Chriſtian, or at leaſt to be thought ſo; for we all know and believe Jeſus Chriſt to be the only Saviour of Mankind, that none can ſave us but he, and that there is none of us but he can ſave, and that all thoſe who truly come to him for Pardon and Salvation, ſhall moſt certainly have it; Hence it is that we would all be thought at leaſt ſo wiſe, and to have ſo much Care of our own Souls as to go after Chriſt, and be his Diſciples. I hope there are but few but who really deſire to be ſo. But I would not have any think that it is ſo eaſie a Matter to be a Diſciple of Chriſt, or a real and true Chriſtian, as the World would make it; no, we may aſſure our ſelves, that as it is the higheſt Honour and Happineſs we can attain unto, ſo we ſhall find it the hardeſt matter in the World to attain unto it; not in its own Nature, but by reaſon of its Contrariety to our natural Temper and Inclinations. For here we ſee what it is that our bleſſed Saviour requires of thoſe that would go after him, even nothing leſs than to deny themſelves, take up their

Croſſes,

Croſſes, and follow him. All which are far greater things than at the firſt ſight or reading they may ſeem to be.

For firſt, ſaith he, *If any one will come after me, let him deny himſelf*; which being the firſt thing which Chriſt requires of thoſe that go after him, it is neceſſary that we ſearch more narrowly into the Nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the reſt. And therefore, for the opening of this, I ſhall not trouble the Reader with the various Expoſitions, and the divers Opinions of learned Men concerning theſe Words, but only mind him in general, that the Self-denyal here ſpoken of is properly oppoſed to Self-love, or that corrupt and vicious Habit of the Soul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own Fancies, Wills, Deſires, Intereſts, and the like, before Chriſt himſelf, and what he is pleaſed either to promiſe to us or require of us. And therefore, when he commands us to deny our ſelves, his Will and Pleaſure in general is this, That we do not indulge, or gratify our ſelves in any thing that ſtands in Oppoſition againſt, and comes into Competition with his Intereſt in the World, or ours in him, howſoever near and dear it may be unto us. But to deny our ſelves whatſoever is plea-

ſing to our ſelves, if it be not ſo to God and Chriſt too, ſo as not to live to our ſelves, but only unto him that died for us, to live as thoſe who are none of our own, but are bought with a Price, and therefore ſhould glorifie God both in our Souls and in our Bodies, which are his, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. But ſeeing this is not only the firſt Leſſon to be learnt by Chriſt's Diſciples, but that which is neceſſarily required in order to whatſoever elſe he commands from us, I ſhall ſhew you more particularly what it is in your ſelves that you are to deny.

Firſt, You muſt deny your own Reaſons in Matters of divine Revelation, ſo as to uſe them no farther than only to ſearch into the Grounds and Motives that we have to believe them to be revealed by God. For this being either proved or ſuppoſed, we are not to ſuffer our Reaſons to be too curious in ſearching into them, but believe them upon the Word and Teſtimony of God himſelf, who is the ſupreme Truth, or Verity it ſelf.

For we who by all our Art and Cunning cannot underſtand the Reaſons of the moſt common and obvious things in Nature, muſt not think to comprehend the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, which tho' they be

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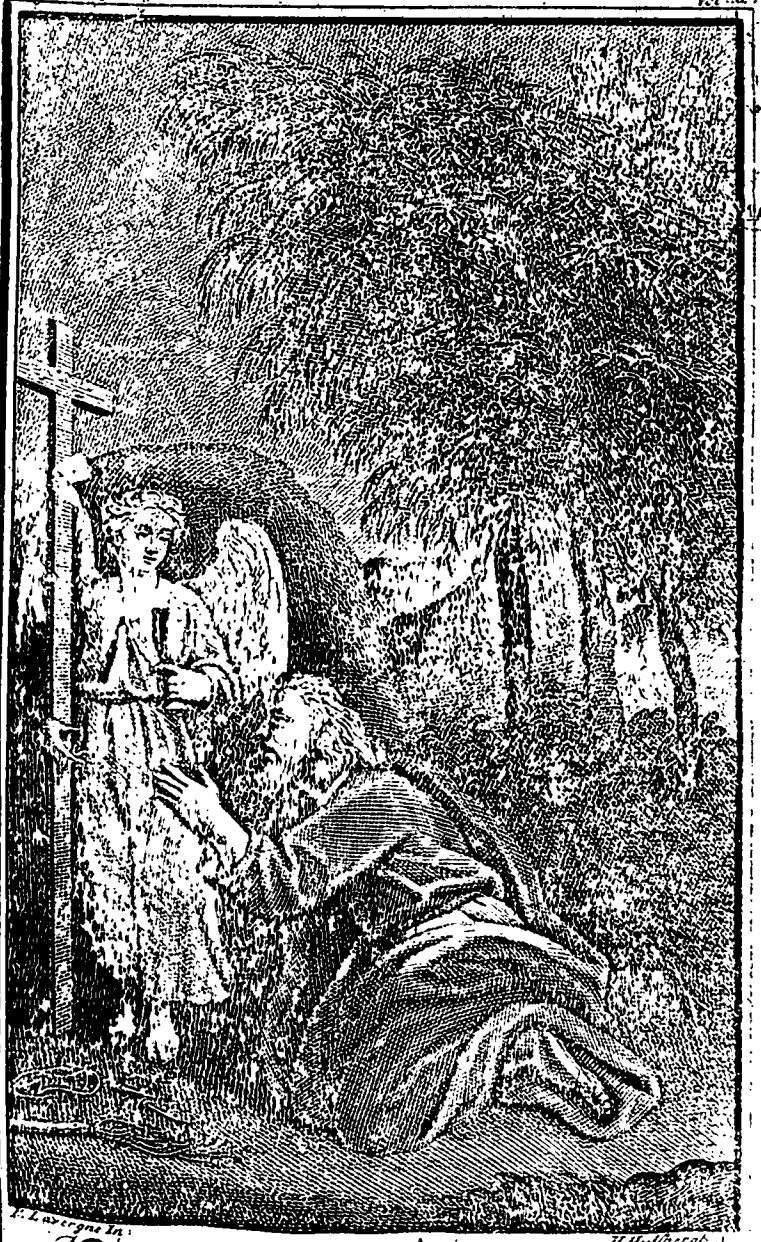
not contrary to our Reaſons, are infinitely above them. *For the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are Fooliſhneſs to him, neither can he know them becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned,* 1 Cor. 2. 14. So that to the underſtanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath revealed to us, there is a great deal more required than what we have by Nature, even the ſupernatural Aſſiſtance of the Spirit himſelf that revealed them. And therefore *if any Man amongſt* us *ſeemeth to be wiſe in this World, let him become a Fool that he may be wiſe,* 1 Cor. 3. 18 that is, He that would be wiſe unto Salvation, muſt look upon himſelf as a Fool, as one incapable by Nature of underſtanding the things that belong unto his everlaſting Peace, without both the Revelation and Aſſiſtance of God himſelf, and therefore muſt not rely upon his own Judgement, but only upon God's Teſtimony in what he doth believe; not believing what his Reaſon, but what God's Word tells him; looking upon it as reaſon enough why he ſhould believe it, becauſe God hath ſaid it.

I know this is an hard Doctrine to Fleſh and Blood. For as *Job* tells us, *Vain Man would be wiſe, though Man be born like a*

wild Aſs's Colt, Job 11. 12. Though by Nature we be never ſo fooliſh, vain and ignorant, underſtanding the great Myſteries of the Goſpel no more than a *wild Aſs's Colt* doth a mathematical Demonſtration, yet howſoever we would fain be thought very wiſe Men, yea ſo wiſe as to be able to comprehend Matters of the higheſt, yea of an infinite Nature, within the narrow compaſs of our finite and ſhallow Capacities. But this is that which we muſt deny our ſelves in, if we deſire to be Chriſt's Diſciples, ſo as to acquieſce in his Word, and believe what he aſſerts, only becauſe he aſſerts it, without ſuffering our Reaſon to interpoſe, but looking upon his Word as more than all the Reaſons and Arguments in the World beſides.

2. You muſt deny your own Wills. Our Wills, it is true, at firſt were made upright and perfect, every way correſpondent to the Will of God himſelf, ſo as to will what he wills, that is what is really Good, and to nill what he nills, that is what is really Evil. But being now perverted, and corrupt with Sin, our Wills are naturally inclined to the Evil which they ſhould be averſe from, and averſe from the Good which they ſhould be inclined to. So that inſtead of chuſing the Good and refuſing the Evil, we are generally apt to chuſe the



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Not my Will but Thine be Done.

the Evil and refuſe the Good: Yet for all that our Wills are thus crooked and perverſe, we cannot endure to have them croſſed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own Wills in every thing, ſo as neither to do any thing our ſelves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but juſt as our ſelves will, who Will uſually juſt contrary to what we ſhould. But now they that would be Chriſt's Diſciples, muſt not be thus ſelf-willed, but deny themſelves the fulfilling of their own Wills, when it doth not conſiſt with the Will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and Maſter hath taught us by his Example as well as Precept, *ſaying, Father, if thou be willing remove this Cup from me, nevertheleſs not my Will but thine be done,* Luke 22. 42. Where we may obſerve that our bleſſed Saviour, as Man, could not but have a natural Averſeneſs from Death, as all Men by Nature have, and that without Sin. Yet though Chriſt's Will, as Man, was never ſo pure and perfect, yet he wholly ſubmits it to the Will of God. He manifeſted indeed that it was the Will of that Nature which he had aſſumed, not to ſuffer Death, *ſaying, if it be poſſible let this Cup paſs from me,* but he ſhews withal that the Will of Man muſt ſtill be ſubject to the Will of God; and

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that Man, even as Man, muſt deny his own Will, whenſoever it runneth not exactly parallel with God's, *ſaying, nevertheleſs, not my Will but thine be done.*

And if Chriſt himſelf denyed his own moſt pure and perfect Will, that his Father's might be accompliſhed, how much more Cauſe have we to deny our Wills, which by nature are always contrary to his Will, yea and to our own Good too, preferring generally that which is evil and deſtructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And verily a great part of true Chriſtianity conſiſteth in thus reſigning our Wills to God's, not minding ſo much which way our own Inclinations bend, as what his Pleaſure and Command is. A notable Inſtance whereof we have in old *Eli*, who queſtionleſs could not but be very willing that the Iniquity of his Sons might be forgiven, and his Family proſper in the World; yet howſoever when God had manifeſted his Pleaſure to him, that his Houſe ſhould be deſtroyed, he ſubmitted his own Will wholly unto God's, ſaying, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. And whoſoever of us would be Chriſt's Diſciple indeed, muſt be ſure thus to deny and renounce his own Will, whenſoever it appears to be contrary unto God's,

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ſo as even to will, that not his own Will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and Maſter himſelf hath taught us each Day to pray, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* And whoſoever hath learn'd this Art of making his own Will bow and ſtoop to God's, hath made a very good Progreſs in the Chriſtian Religion, eſpecially in that part of it which requires us to deny our ſelves.

And ſeeing we muſt deny our Wills, we muſt needs deny our Affections too, which are indeed nothing elſe but the ſeveral Motions of the Will towards Good and Evil, but uſually they are ſo diſorderly and irregular, as to place themſelves upon Objects directly oppoſite to what they were deſigned for; for that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; deſire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to deſire; rejoice in thoſe things which we ought to grieve for, and are grieved at ſuch things as we ought to rejoyce in. So that if we ſuffer our Affections to move according to their natural Tendency and corrupt Inclinations, we ſhall be ſo far from going after Chriſt, that we ſhall continually be running from him. And therefore it muſt be our great Care and Study to bridle our Affections, deny them

them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper Objects; yea, and to deny our ſelves too the lawful uſe of ſuch things as our Affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for Example: It is lawful, yea our Duty to love our Relations, but if our Love to them becomes exorbitant, ſo as to love them more than God, our Love to them muſt be turned into Hatred in compariſon of our Love to him, *Luke* 14. 26. And whatſoever lawful thing it is that we take Pleaſure in, if once we find that our Pleaſure in that extinguiſheth, or but damps that Pleaſure which we uſed, or ought to have in God, we are to deny our ſelves ſuch Pleaſures as theſe are, and rather deſpiſe our ſelves than God.

Yea we muſt deny ourſelves moreover the Uſe and Enjoyment of our Eſtates and earthly Poſſeſſions, whenſoever they come into Competition with his Glory. So that if it comes to that Point, that we muſt either leave our Eſtates to enjoy Chriſt, or leave Chriſt to enjoy our Eſtates; we muſt be willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatſoever elſe we have, rather than our Intereſt in Chriſt. For indeed he is not worthy to be Chriſt's Diſciple that doth not prefer him before all things elſe; neither

ther he that loves the World at all in Compariſon of Chriſt: *For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 *John* 2. 15. And therefore he that would be Chriſt's Diſciple indeed, muſt fix his Heart ſo faſt on Chriſt, that it hang looſe and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concerned about them, than as if he had them not. So that though he have all things beſides Chriſt, he muſt have nothing but him, or at leaſt in Compariſon of him; yea, be ready to part with all that he may gain Chriſt. And though many of us may think this an hard Saying, we may aſſure our ſelves, it is no more than what we muſt do, if we deſire to be Chriſt's Diſciples, *Luke* 14. 33.

Furthermore, we muſt deny our ſelves thoſe Sins eſpecially, and Luſts which we have or do ſtill indulge our ſelves in, for thus the Goſpel teacheth you in a particular manner, *to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts*, Tit. 2. 12. And therefore we in vain pretend to be true Chriſtians, ſo long as we live in any one known Sin with any Love unto it, or Delight in it. I ſuppoſe none of my Readers guilty of all Sins, and I fear there are few but live in ſome. No Man but may be naturally

rally averſe from ſome Sins, but it is very rare to find one that is enclined to none; for ordinarily every Man hath his Darling, his beloved Sin, his own Sin, as *David* himſelf once had, though he afterwards kept himſelf from it, *Pſal.* 18. 23. So I fear none of my Readers but have ſome Sin, which he may in a peculiar manner call his own, as being that which his Thoughts run moſt upon, and his Deſires are carried moſt unto, which he labours moſt after, and takes moſt Pleaſure in, which he is moſt loth to be reproved for, and moſt eaſily overcome by. Now this and whatſoever other Sins any of us are addicted to, we muſt wholly leave, and utterly renounce, if ever we deſire to be Chriſt's Diſciples. And therefore ſo long as any of us live in any known Sin, as in Pride or Prodigality, in Oppreſſion or Covetouſneſs, in Malice or Uncleanneſs, in Drunkenneſs, Uncharitableneſs, or any other Sin whatſoever, we muſt not think our ſelves to be Chriſtians indeed, Chriſt will never own us for his Diſciples; for ſo long as we live in any known Sin, it is that Sin, not Chriſt that is our Maſter, and therefore if we would liſt our ſelves into his Service, we muſt be ſure to deny our ſelves whatſoever we know to be offenſive to him.

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There is ſtill another thing behind wherein we muſt deny our ſelves, if we deſire to go after Chriſt, and that is, we muſt deny and renounce all our Self-righteouſneſs, and all hopes and confidences from our ſelves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of Self-denyal, for naturally we are all prone to ſacrifice to our own Nets, to burn incenſe to our own Drags, to boaſt of our own good Works, and to pride our ſelves with the conceit of our own Righteouſneſs. Though we be never ſo ſinful, we would not be thought to be ſo, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by Men, but by God himſelf, for ſomething or other which our ſelves do, tho' when all comes to all, we know not what that ſhould be; but howſoever the pride of our Heart is ſuch, that we are loth to go out of our ſelves to look for Righteouſneſs, or to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reaſon that Juſtification by Faith in Chriſt hath had ſo many Adverſaries in the World; Mankind in general being ſo much in love with themſelves, and doting upon what themſelves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilifie their own Obedience and good Works, ſo much as to think that they ſtand in need of any other Righteouſneſs beſides their own; as if their

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own Righteouſneſs was ſo perfect, that God himſelf could find no fault with it, nor make any Exceptions againſt it, but muſt needs acknowledge them to be juſt and righteous Perſons for it.

Whereas, alas! there is not the beſt Action that ever a mere Mortal did, but if examined by the ſtrict Rules of Juſtice, it is far from being good, yea, ſo far, that God himſelf may juſtly pronounce it evil, and by conſequence condemn the Perſon that did it, for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any Man doth or can do, for which he can in reaſon expect to be juſtified before God, our very Righteouſneſs being, as the Prophet tells, *but as filthy rags*, and our moſt holy Performances fraught with Sin and Imperfection, and therefore ſo far from juſtifying us, that we may juſtly be condemned for them; but this Mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our Hearts being ſuch, that by all means we muſt have ſomething in ourſelves whereof to glory before God himſelf. But wo be to that Perſon who hath no other Righteouſneſs but his own, wherein to appear before the Judge of the whole World. For howſoever ſpecious his Actions may ſeem to Men, they will be adjudged Sins before the Eternal God.

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He therefore that would come to Chriſt, although he muſt labour after Righteouſneſs to the utmoſt of his Power, yet when he hath done all, he muſt renounce it and look upon himſelf as an unprofitable Servant. For *Chriſt came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*, Mat 9.13. that is, he came not to call ſuch Perſons as think they have righteouſneſs enough of their own to ſerve their turns, for ſuch Perſons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them; but he calls Sinners, that is, ſuch as may perhaps be as righteous as the other, but they do not think themſelves to be ſo, but look upon themſelves as undone for ever, unleſs they have ſomething elſe to truſt to, than their own good Works and Obedience to the Moral Law. Such Perſons therefore Chriſt came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find Reſt and Righteouſneſs in him; and if any of us deſire to go after Chriſt, ſo as to be his Diſciples, we muſt be ſure to look upon our ſelves as Sinners, as deſerving nothing but Wrath and Vengeance for whatſoever we have done; we muſt renounce all our own Righteouſneſs, and be ſo far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for ſo really we have not. And when we have laid aſide all

thoughts of our own Righteouſneſs, as to the matter of our Juſtification before God, then, and not till then, ſhall we be rightly qualified to embrace anothers, even that Righteouſneſs which is by Faith in Chriſt. Thus St. *Paul*, though he had as much, yea, more reaſon to truſt in the Fleſh or in himſelf than others; for himſelf ſaith, *that as touching the righteouſneſs which is of the law, he was blameleſs*, Phil. 3. 6. Yet ſaith he, *what things were gain to me*, thoſe *I counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord. For whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, ver. 7, 8, 9. Thus therefore it is that all thoſe muſt do, who deſire to be as St. *Paul* was, real Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, as we muſt forſake our Sins, ſo we muſt renounce our Righteouſneſs too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of Self-denyal, thus to deny our ſelves all that Pride, Pleaſure and Confidence, which we uſed to take in the thoughts of our own Righteouſneſs and Obedience to the Law of God. But we muſt remember that the firſt thing

thing which our Saviour enjoins thoſe that come after him, is to deny themſelves.

Thus I have ſhewn what it is in our ſelves that we muſt deny, and how it is that we muſt deny our ſelves, if we deſire to go after Chriſt; we muſt deny our ſelves the curioſity of ſearching too much into the Myſteries of the Goſpel, by the Light of our own clouded Reaſons; we muſt deny our Self-conceit, our Self-will, our Self-love, Self-intereſts, Self-confidence, and whatſoever proceeds from and terminates in our ſenſual and ſinful ſelves, ſo as to have no delight in nor dependance upon our ſelves; yea, we muſt ſo deny our ſelves, as to be quite taken off of our former ſelves, and become other Creatures than what before we were. Thus St. *Ambroſe* explains theſe words, ſaying, *Seipſum ſibi homo abneget & totus mutetur, Let a Man deny himſelf to himſelf, ſo as to be wholly changed from what he was.* But then you'll ſay, what need is there of all this trouble, what reaſon can be given that a Man muſt deny himſelf before he can be a true Chriſtian?

To that I anſwer, it is reaſon enough that Chriſt hath commanded us to do it, and ſurely he beſt knows whom he will accept of as his Diſciples, and what is neceſſary to be done in order to our being ſo. And

he hath ſaid in plain terms, *If any man will come after me let him deny himſelf*, implying, that he that doth not deny himſelf cannot go after him.

But beſides that, there is an impoſſibility in the thing it ſelf, that any one ſhould be a true Chriſtian, or go after Chriſt, and not deny himſelf, as may be eaſily perceived, if they will but conſider what true Chriſtianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Chriſtian. A true Chriſtian we know is one that lives by Faith, and not by Sight, that *looks not at the things which are ſeen*, but *at thoſe things which are not ſeen*, that believes whatſoever Chriſt hath ſaid, truſteth on whatſoever he hath promiſed, and obeyeth whatſoever he hath commanded; that receiveth Chriſt as his only Prieſt to make atonement for him, as his only Prophet to inſtruct, and as his only Lord and Maſter to rule and govern him. In a word, a Chriſtian is one that gives up himſelf and all he hath to Chriſt, who gave himſelf and all he hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true Chriſtianity implies and ſuppoſes the denyal of our ſelves, without which it is as impoſſible for a Man to be a Chriſtian as it is for a Subject to be rebellious and loyal to his Prince at the ſame time; and therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary that we go out of our

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ſelves before we can go to him, we muſt ſtrip our ſelves of our very ſelves before we can put on Chriſt; for Chriſt himſelf hath told us, that *No man can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other*, Matt. 6. 24. We *cannot ſerve* both *God and Mammon*, Chriſt and our ſelves too; ſo that we muſt either deny our ſelves to go after Chriſt, or elſe deny Chriſt to go after our ſelves, ſo as to mind our own ſelfiſh ends and deſigns in the World.

Wherefore I hope I need not uſe any other Arguments to perſuade any to deny themſelves in the ſenſe already explained; I dare ſay there is none amongſt us but would willingly be what we profeſs, even a real Chriſtian, and ſo go after Chriſt here, as to come to him hereafter. But we have now ſeen how Chriſt himſelf hath told us, that *we muſt deny our ſelves*, if we deſire to ſerve and enjoy him. And verily it is an hard caſe if we cannot deny our ſelves for him, who ſo far denied himſelf for us, as to lay down his own Life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himſelf, yea, who himſelf was the true God, ſo far denied himſelf as to become Man, yea, *A man of ſorrows and acquainted with griefs*, for us, and cannot we deny our ſelves ſo

much as a Fancy, a Conceit, a Sin or Luſt for him? How then can we expect that he ſhould own us for his Friends, his Servants or Diſciples? No, he'll never do it, neither can we in reaſon expect that he ſhould give himſelf and all the Merits of his Death and Paſſion unto us, ſo long as we think much to give our ſelves to him, or to deny our ſelves for him. And therefore if we deſire to be made Partakers of all thoſe glorious things that he hath purchaſed with his own moſt precious Blood for the Sons of Men; let us begin here, indulge our Fleſh no longer, but deny our ſelves whatſoever God hath been pleaſed to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each Day more and more to live above our ſelves, above the temper of our Bodies, and above the allurements of the World, live as thoſe who believe and profeſs that they are none of their own, but Chriſt's, his by Creation, it was he that made us, his by Preſervation, it is he that maintains us, and his by Redemption, it is he that hath purchaſed and redeemed us with his own Blood. And therefore let us deny our ſelves for the future to our very ſelves, whoſe we are not, and devote our ſelves to him whoſe alone we are; by this we ſhall manifeſt our ſelves to be Chriſt's Diſciples indeed, eſpecially if we do not only deny our ſelves,

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but alſo take up our Croſs and follow him; which brings me to the ſecond thing which our bleſſed Saviour here requires of thoſe who would go after him, even *to take up their Croſs.*

Where, by the Croſs, we are to underſtand whatſoever Troubles or Calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the Performance of our Duty to God or Man, which they that would go after Chriſt muſt take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor ſinking under them; for we muſt not think that Chriſt invites us to an earthly Paradiſe of Idleneſs and outward Pleaſures, as if we had nothing to do or to ſuffer for him. For even as Men, we cannot but find many Croſſes in the World, but as Chriſtians we muſt expect more, for Chriſt himſelf hath told us, that in the World we ſhall have Tribulation, *John* 16. 33. And therefore whatſoever we meet with, is no more than what we are to look for; eſpecially if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to Heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub, for God himſelf hath told us that it is *through many tribulations* that we muſt *enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Acts 14. 22. And therefore we muſt not think to be carried up to Heaven with the breath of popular Applauſe, nor to ſwim

through a deluge of carnal Pleaſures into the Haven of everlaſting Happineſs. No, we muſt look to be toſſed to and fro in this World, as in a raging and tempeſtuous Ocean, and never look for perpetual Calmneſs and Tranquility, untill we are got above the Clouds, yea even above the Sun and Stars themſelves. This World was always a World of trouble, and ever will be; its very Friends, and they that have their Portion here, can find no quiet nor ſatisfaction in it; but the Diſciples of Chriſt *they are not of this world*, as Chriſt himſelf tells us, *John* 17. 14. and therefore no wonder if the World frowns more upon them than others. The Way they walk in is oppoſite to the World, it is enmity it ſelf to the Fleſh, and therefore no wonder if they meet with ſo much Enmity and Oppoſition here; the Way wherein they go after Chriſt is a croſs Way, it is croſs to Sin, croſs to Satan, croſs to the World, croſs to our very ſelves as we are by Nature, and by conſequence croſs to all Men in the World but Chriſt's Diſciples, and therefore it is no wonder they meet with ſo many Croſſes in it. But howſoever if we deſire to go after Chriſt, he hath told us before hand what we muſt expect, as he hath born the Croſs before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea

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we muſt not only bear it, but take it up too: Not that we ſhould run our ſelves into danger, but that we ſhould baulk no Duty to avoid it, ſo as to be willing and ready to undergo the greateſt Suffering, rather than to commit the leaſt Sin, and to run the greateſt Danger rather than neglect the ſmalleſt Duty. If whilſt we are walking in the narrow Path of Holineſs, there happens to lie a Croſs in the way, we muſt not go on one ſide nor on the other ſide of it out of the Path we walk in, neither muſt we kick and ſpurn at it, but we muſt patiently take it up and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at firſt, it will ſoon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our Progreſs towards Heaven.

But here we muſt have a great care to underſtand our Saviour's Meaning, and ſo our own Duty aright; for we muſt not think that every Trouble we meet with in the World is the Croſs of Chriſt, for we may ſuffer for our Fancy or Humour, or perhaps for our Sin and Tranſgreſſion of the Laws of God or Men, and if ſo, it is our own Croſs, not Chriſt's which we take upon us; we may thank our ſelves for it; I am ſure Chriſt hath no cauſe to thank us: *For this is thankworthy*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *if a man for conſcience towards God, endure grief*,

grief, ſuffering wrongfully, 1 Pet. 2. 19, 20. And therefore the Duty which our Saviour here impoſeth on us, in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to ſuffer what we can for the Glory of God and the furtherance of the Goſpel, and that we omit no Duty, nor commit any Sin for fear of ſuffering; not to think much of any Trouble that befalls us for Chriſt's ſake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the Apoſtles rejoiced, that *they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name*, Acts 5. 41. Which was a clear inſtance of their performing the Duty here enjoined both them and us, under the Name of *taking up our Croſs*.

And I hope there is none of us can take it ill that Chriſt hath impoſed ſo ſevere a Duty upon us; for we may aſſure our ſelves he requires no more of us than what himſelf hath undergone before, ſo that we can ſuffer nothing for him, but what he hath ſuffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our Hearts? ſo had he, *Matt.* 26 38. Have we pains and tortures in our Bodies? ſo had he, *Matt.* 27. 29, 30. Are we derided and ſcoffed at? ſo was he, *Matt.* 27. 31. Are we arraigned or condemned, yea do we ſuffer Death it ſelf? it is no more than what our Lord and Maſter hath done before. And let us remember

ber what he told us when he was upon the Earth, *The diſciple is not above his maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord*, Matt. 10. 24. If we be Chriſt's Diſciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the World than Chriſt himſelf did, neither indeed can we fare ſo bad; for it is impoſſible that we ſhould undergo ſo much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the Sufferings of Men, his the Sufferings of one who was God as well as Man; whereby Sufferings in general are ſanctified to our human Nature, it having already undergone them in the Perſon of the Son of God, ſo that it can be now no diſparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea death it ſelf, or any other Calamity whatſoever in this World, ſeeing the Son of God himſelf, he that made the World, underwent the ſame while himſelf was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to ſtoop down and take up the Croſs of Chriſt, as conſidering that Chriſt having born it before us, hath ſo bleſſed and ſanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, an advantageous, yea and a pleaſant Croſs, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully and conſtantly as they ought to do, eſpecially ſeeing it is ſuch a Croſs as leads unto a Crown; and whatſoever we can do or ſuf-

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fer for Chriſt here, will be fully recompenced with Glory hereafter, and therefore inſtead of being troubled to take up our Croſs, we are rather to rejoyce that we have any to take up.

Thus we ſee in few words what it is which our Saviour commands from us, when he enjoyns us to deny our ſelves, and take up our Croſs, even that we do not gratifie our ſelves in any thing that is ungrateful unto him, nor grudge to take up any Croſs, or ſuffer any trouble we meet with in the World for his ſake, thinking nothing too dear to forſake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for him, who thought not his own Life too dear, nor the Croſs it ſelf too heavy to bear for us; what now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's Pleaſure, we ſhould all reſolve to do it. There is none of us but hope and deſire to be ſaved by him, but that we can never be, unleſs we obſerve what he hath preſcribed in order to our Salvation: And amongſt other things, we ſee how he hath commanded us, to deny our ſelves, and take up our Croſs; as any of us therefore deſires to be Chriſtians indeed, ſo as to ſee Chriſt's Face with comfort in another World, let us bethink our ſelves ſeriouſly what Sins we have hitherto indulged our ſelves in; I fear there are but few, if any amongſt us, but

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are conſcious to themſelves, that they have and do ſtill live, either in the conſtant neglect of ſome known Duty, or elſe in the frequent Commiſſion of ſome beloved Sin; what that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to Mens own Conſciences; only I deſire them to deal faithfully with their own Souls, and not ſuffer themſelves to be fooled into a fond and vain Perſuaſion that they have any intereſt in Chriſt, or are truly his Diſciples, until they deny themſelves that Sin, whatſoever it is, which they have hitherto indulged themſelves in. And let us not think that we ſhall deny our ſelves any real pleaſure or profit, by renouncing our Sins; for what pleaſure can we have in diſpleaſing God, or profit in loſing our own Souls? No, we ſhall gratifie our ſelves more than we can imagine, by denying our ſelves, as much as we are able, whatſoever is offenſive or diſpleaſing unto God; for we may be ſure, he that came into the World on purpoſe to ſave us from Evil, commands us nothing but for our own Good, neither would he ever have obliged us to deny our ſelves, if we could have been ſaved without it; and as for the Croſs, that he was ſo well acquainted with, that he would never have impoſed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indiſpenſably neceſſary for us. And there-

therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true Chriſtians, let us manifeſt it to the World to and our own Conſciences, by denying our ſelves whatſoever Chriſt hath denied us, and by obſerving whatſoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any Croſs, that he for his own ſake ſhall ſuffer to be laid upon us, ſtill remembring, that Self-denyal, though it be unpleaſant, is a moſt neceſſary Duty; and the Croſs, though it be never ſo heavy, it is but ſhort, and hath nothing leſs than a Crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal Crown, which all thoſe ſhall moſt certainly obtain, who deny themſelves.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

UPON

STRIVING *to Enter at the* STRAIT GATE.

AS certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we ſhall all be in another World, either in a World of Happineſs, or elſe in a World of Miſery, or if you will, either in Heaven or in Hell. For theſe are the two only Places which all Mankind from the beginning of the World to the end of it, muſt live in for evermore, ſome in the one, ſome in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here; and therefore it is worth the while to take a View and Proſpect now and then of both theſe Places, and it will not be amiſs if we do it now; for which end, I deſire the Reader

der in his ſerious and compoſed Thoughts to attend me firſt into the celeſtial Manſions, above yonder glorious Sun and the Stars themſelves; where not only the Cherubins and Seraphins, Angels and Archangels, but many alſo of our Brethren, the Sons of Men, at this very moment are enjoying the Preſence, and ſinging forth the Praiſes of the moſt High God. There are the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, perfect in themſelves, and perfect in all their Actions, perfectly free from all both Sin and Miſery, perfectly full of all true Grace and Glory, all their Faculties being reduced to that moſt perfect and excellent Frame and Conſtitution, that their Underſtandings are continually taken up with the Contemplations of the ſupreme Truth, and their Wills in the embracement of the chiefeſt Good; ſo that all the Inclinations of their Souls reſt in God as in their proper Centre, in whom by conſequence they enjoy as much as they can deſire, yea as much as they can be made capable of deſiring. For all thoſe infinite Perfections that are concentred in God himſelf, are now in their Poſſeſſion, to ſolace and delight themſelves in the full and perfect Enjoyment of them; by which means they are as happy as God himſelf can make them, inſomuch that at this very moment methinks we may

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all behold them ſo raviſhed, ſo tranſported with their celeſtial Joys, that it may juſtly ſtrike us into admiration, how ever Creatures which once were ſinful, could be made ſo pure, ſo perfect, and altogether ſo happy as they are. And could we but leave our Bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the New *Jeruſalem* that is above, we could not but be raviſh'd and tranſported at the very ſight both of the Place and Inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greateſt Emperors of this World, with nothing elſe than Crowns of Glory on their Heads, and Scepters of Righteouſneſs in their Hands, where they think of nothing but of the Glory of God, diſcourſe of nothing but praiſing him, do nothing but adore and worſhip him; in a word, whatſoever is agreeable to our Natures, whatſoever is deſirable to our Souls, whatſoever can any way conduce to make Men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed, by all and every Perſon that is in Heaven Whereas on the other ſide, if we bring down our thoughts from Heaven, and ſend them as low as Hell, to conſider the moſt deplorable eſtate and condition of thoſe who inhabit the Regions of Darkneſs, them we ſhall find as miſerable as the other are happy; not only in that they are deprived of the Viſion and

Fruition of the chiefeſt Good, but likewiſe in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as infinite Juſtice can adjudge them to, and infinite Power inflict upon them; inſomuch, that could we lay our Ear to the entrance of that bottomleſs Pit, what howlings and ſhriekings ſhould we hear, what weeping and wailing and gnaſhing of Teeth in the midſt of thoſe infernal Flames, where, as our Saviour himſelf tells us, *The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark 9: 44. That is, where their Conſciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former Sins, and the Fire of God's Wrath is continually burning in them, never to be quenched or abated. For certainly as the ſmiles and favour of the eternal God conſtitute the Joys of Heaven, ſo do his frowns and anger make up the Flames of Hell. To ſee him that made us diſpleaſed with us, to ſee Mercy it ſelf to frown upon us, to ſee the great and all-glorious Creator of the World, the chiefeſt Good, to look angrily upon us, and to mean himſelf offended at us, and incenſed againſt us! Methinks the very thoughts of it are ſufficient to make the ſtouteſt Heart amongſt us tremble: But then what ſhall we think of thoſe poor Souls that ſee and feel it? What ſhall we think of them?

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Queſtionleſs they are more miſerable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot poſſibly conceive either the greatneſs of Heavens Glory, or the ſharpneſs of Hell Torments, only this we know, and may be certain of, that whatſoever is ungrateful to their Minds, whatſoever is troubleſome to their Thoughts, whatſoever is contrary to their Deſires, whatſoever is painful to their Bodies, or whatſoever is or can be deſtructive and tormenting to their Souls, that all they who are once in Hell, ſhall fear and feel, and that for ever.

But this is too ſad and doleful a Subject to inſiſt on long, neither ſhould I have mentioned it, but for our own Good, and to prepare us the better, both for the underſtanding and improving the Advice of our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the ſtrait Gate*, &c. The meaning of which Words, in brief, may be reduced to theſe three Heads.

Firſt, That it is an eaſie matter to go to Hell, that Place of Torments we have now been deſcribing, and by Conſequence that many go thither; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leadeth thither.

Secondly, That it is a hard and difficult thing to get to Heaven, that Place of Joys we before ſpake of, and by Conſequence that but few get thither. *For ſtrait*

is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to it.

Laſtly, Howſoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have us ſtrive to get to Heaven, ſo as to preſs through that ſtrait Gate, and walk in that narrow Way that leadeth into Life.

As for the firſt, that the gate is wide, and the way broad, that leads to Hell, or that it is an eaſie matter to go thither, I need not uſe many Words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it; I dare ſay there is ſcarce any one but believes it, yea and hath oftentimes found it too true by Experience, even that it is an eaſie matter to ſin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to Hell; ſo broad, that they that walk in it can find no Bounds or Limits in it, wherewithin to contain themſelves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are ſtill in the ready way to Ruin and Deſtruction. And uſually it is as plain as broad, ſo that Men rarely meet with any Roughneſs or Trouble in it, but rather with all the Pleaſures and Delights which they deſire, who look no higher than to pleaſe the Fleſh; yea, whatſoever it is that they naturally deſire, they ſtill meet with it in the Road to Hell; and whatſoever is ungrateful and irkſome to them,

them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of Sin. There are no Croſſes to be taken up, no ſelf to be denied, but rather indulged and gratifyed; there are no ſuch tedious and troubleſome things as examining our Hearts, and mortifying our Luſts, as praying or hearing, as faſting or watching: Theſe are only to be found in the narrow Path that leads to Heaven, the broad way to Hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being ſtrewed all along with carnal Pleaſures and ſenſual Delights, with popular Applauſe, and earthly Riches, and ſuch fine Things as ſilly Mortals uſe to be taken with.

And hence it is, that, as our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide Gate that leads to Ruin, becauſe they ſee not whither it leads, but they ſee the Baits and Allurements which are in it, which they cannot but crowd about as Fiſhes about the Hook, or as Flies about a Candle, till they be deſtroyed. Yea, this way to Deſtruction is ſo broad, that almoſt all the World is continually walking in it; the Gate ſo wide that thouſands at a time paſs through it. And therefore we may well conclude it is an eaſie thing to go to that Place of Torments which even now we ſpake of, or rather that it is an hard, a difficult mat-

ter to keep out of it; the way being ſo narrow that carries from it that it is a difficult thing to find it, and the way ſo broad that leads unto it that none can miſs of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

But I hope none of my Readers have ſo, God forbid they ſhould have a mind to go to Hell; their taking religious Books into their Hands is rather an Argument that they have a mind to go to Heaven, and read on purpoſe to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all Opportunities of finding out the way to Bliſs; for we may aſſure our ſelves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but much more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, ſo that there is ſcarce any Path to be ſeen, moſt People going either on one ſide, or elſe on the other ſide of it; ſome running into the By-Paths of Error, Hereſie, or Schiſm, others into the broad way of Prophaneſs or Security: Inſomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right Path that leads directly to the New *Hieruſalem*, the Place of Reſt. I ſpeak not this of my ſelf; no, Chriſt himſelf, that came from Heaven to Earth, on purpoſe to ſhew us the way from Earth to Heaven, ſaith, That *ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

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And let not any think that Chriſt ſpoke theſe Words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what he ſaid or no. For queſtionleſs, one great Reaſon why ſo few ever come to Heaven, is becauſe moſt think it ſo eaſie to get thither that they need not take any Care or Pains about it. For even amongſt our ſelves, to whom the Goſpel is ſo clearly reveal'd, Men generally think if they do but read the Scriptures, and hear Sermons, and live honeſtly with their Neighbours, ſo as to harm no body, but pay every one their own, then they ſhall as ſurely come to Heaven as if they were there already; nay, many are ſo ſimple as to think that their Separation from the Church Militant on Earth is the way to bring them to the Church Triumphant in Heaven; and others ſo ridiculous as to believe that a Death-bed Repentance is ſufficient to entitle them to eternal Life. But ſtay a while: It is not ſo eaſie a matter to get to Heaven. Indeed to me it ſeems one of the greateſt Myſteries in the World, that ever any Man or Woman ſhould come thither, that ſuch ſinful Worms as we are, who are born in Sin, and live ſo long in Sin and Rebellion againſt the great Creator of the World, ſhould ever be received ſo far into his Grace and Favour as to enjoy

Life and eternal Happineſs in him. And did we look no farther than our ſelves, we might juſtly deſpair of ever obtaining ſo tranſcendent Glory which we are ſo altogether unworthy of. But the Goodneſs of God both is and hath been ſo great to Mankind, that there is none of us but in and through the Merits of Chriſt Jeſus, is in a Capacity of it. But we muſt not think that it is ſo eaſie a thing to come to Heaven, as the Devil, the World, and our own baſe Hearts, would perſuade us it is: If we do, we are never likely to come thither; no, we may aſſure our ſelves, as Heaven is the greateſt Good that we can attain, ſo doth it require our greateſt Care and Study imaginable to attain it.

This therefore is that which I ſhall endeavour to convince Men of, and account my ſelf happy if I can do it. For, I dare ſay, there is none of us but deſire to ſee Chriſt in Glory, and to be happy with him and in him for ever; but that we can never be, unleſs we do whatſoever is required of us in order to it; and if we think it is ſo eaſie a matter to do whatſoever is required of us, I have juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect that we never yet made tryal of it, nor ſet our ſelves ſeriouſly upon the Performance of thoſe Duties which are enjoined us here in Reference to our being happy for ever.

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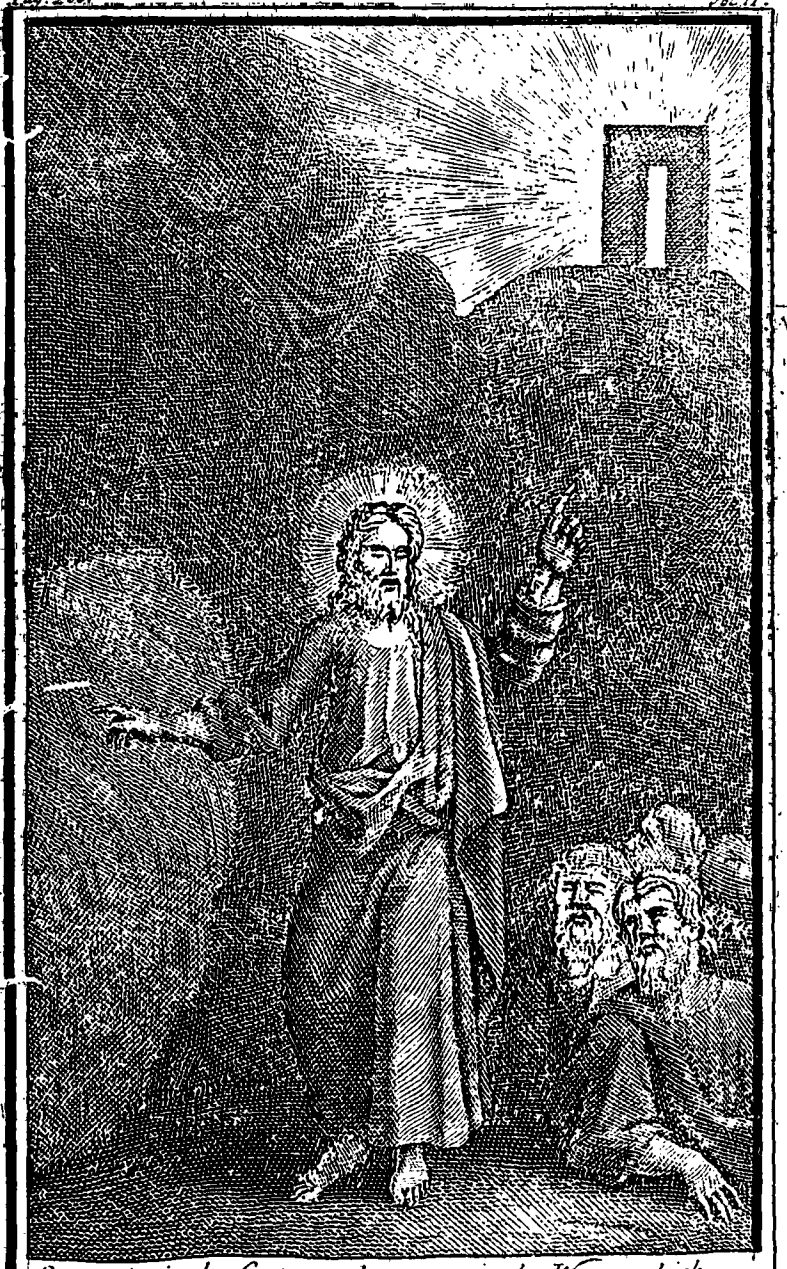

Straight is the Gate and narrow is the Way which — leadeth unto Life. P. Lavergne Inv. H. Hulsbergh Sculp.

For if we have ſet upon it in good earneſt, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reaſon of our natural averſeneſs from what is Good, and Inclinations unto Evil. For we all know, that *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. So that Holineſs is the way, the direct and only way that leads to Heaven; neither is there any way imaginable of being happy hereafter but by being holy here. And though it be an eaſie thing to profeſs Holineſs, and to perform ſome external Acts of it; yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, ſo as we muſt be if ever we would go to Heaven, this is every whit as difficult as the other is eaſie.

For firſt, I ſuppoſe, all will grant that he is not truly holy that lives in any known Sin, as the Apoſtle alſo intimates, ſaying, He that *is born of God doth not commit ſin*, 1 John 3. 9. And therefore he that ſtill indulgeth himſelf in the Commiſſion of any known Sin, he is not yet regenerate or born of God, he is not truly holy. So that to our being ſo holy here, as that we may be happy hereafter, it is abſolutely and indiſpenſably neceſſary that we forſake and avoid to the utmoſt of our Power whatſoever is offenſive unto God, and contrary to his Laws. But it is as difficult as it is neceſſary to forſake Sin as we ought to do.

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It is an eaſie matter, I confeſs, to rail at Sin, to backbite others, or blame our ſelves for it. But that is not the Buſineſs; but to loath our Sins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor as much as ever we deſired them, and to be as much averſe from them as ever we were inclined to them, to forſake Sin as Sin, and by conſequence all Sin whatſoever, one as well as another; ſo as to deny our ſelves all that Pleaſure we were wont to take in any Sin, and all that ſeeming Profit which we uſed to receive by it, and that too, out of love to God and fear of his Diſpleaſure. This is to forſake Sin indeed, but it is ſooner ſpoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of Time, and Skill, and Pains to get ſo great a Conqueſt over our ſelves as this is, to cut off our Right Hand, pluck out our Right Eye, and caſt it from us; even renounce and forſake thoſe very beloved and darling Sins, which the Temper and Conſtitution of our Bodies, the Corruption of our Hearts, and conſtant Cuſtom and Practice hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very Natures muſt be changed, before we can ever leave them. And therefore it muſt needs be a Matter of as great Difficulty as it is of Moment, to maſter and ſubdue thoſe Sins and Luſts that have been long predominant in

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us, which I dare ſay many of us have found by their own ſad and woful Experience, having ſtruggled perhaps many Years againſt ſome Corruption, and yet to this Day have not got it under, nor totally ſubdued it. And it is ſuch, and ſuch alone, who are competent Judges in this Caſe; for they that never ſtrove againſt their Sins, cannot know how ſtrong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to thoſe who have made it their Buſineſs to deſtroy and mortifie their Luſts, that I appeal, whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore muſt needs acknowledge it to be ſo; and by Conſequence that is no eaſie matter to get to Heaven, ſeeing it is ſo hard to keep out of Hell, and to avoid thoſe Sins which otherwiſe will certainly bring us thither; every Sin unrepented of having eternal Puniſhment entailed upon it.

And if it be ſo hard to forſake Sin, how difficult muſt it needs be to perform all thoſe Duties, and to exert all thoſe Graces which are neceſſarily required, in order to our attaining everlaſting Happineſs. It is true, praying and hearing, which are the ordinary Means for the obtaining true Grace and Holineſs, are Duties very common and cuſtomary amongſt us, but they

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are never the eaſier becauſe they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accuſtomed to a careleſs and perfunctory performing theſe Duties, cannot but find it an hard and difficult Matter to keep our Hearts ſo cloſe unto them, as to perform them as we ought to do, and ſo as that we may be really ſaid to do them. For we muſt not think that ſitting at Church while the Word of God is preached, is hearing the Word of God, or that being preſent there whilſt Prayers are read, is real praying. No, no, there is a great deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright; inſomuch that for mine own part, I really think that Prayer, as it is the higheſt, ſo is it the hardeſt Duty that we can be engaged in. All the Faculties of our Souls, as well as Members of our Bodies, being obliged to put forth themſelves in their ſeveral Capacities, to the due Performance of it.

And as for thoſe ſeveral Graces and Virtues which our Souls muſt be adorned withal, before ever they can come to Heaven, though it be eaſie to talk of them, it is not ſo to act them. I ſhall inſtance only in ſome few; as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's ſake; to hope on nothing but God's Promiſes, and to fear nothing but his Diſpleaſure;

ſure; to love other Mens Perſons, ſo as to hate their Vices, and ſo to hate their Vices as ſtill to love their Perſons; not to covet Riches when we have them not, nor truſt on them when we have them; to deny our ſelves that we may pleaſe God, and to take up our Croſs that we may follow Chriſt; to live above the World whilſt we are in it, and to deſpiſe it while we uſe it; to be always upon our watch and guard, ſtrictly obſerving not only the outward Actions of our Life, but the inward Motions of our Hearts; to hate thoſe very Sins which we uſed to love, and to love thoſe very Duties which we uſed to hate; to chuſe the greateſt Affliction before the leaſt Sin, and to neglect the getting of the greateſt Gain, rather than the performing of the ſmalleſt Duty; to believe Truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the teſtimony of one whom we never ſaw; to ſubmit our Wills to God's, and delight our ſelves in obeying him; to be patient under Sufferings, and thankful for all the Troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do and ſuffer any thing we can for him, who hath done and ſuffered ſo much for us; to cloath the Naked, feed the Hungry, relieve the Indigent, and reſcue the Oppreſſed to the utmoſt of our Power: In a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient

obedient to Chriſt, as loyal to our Prince, as faithful to our Friends, as loving to our Enemies, as charitable to the Poor, as juſt in our Dealings, as eminent in all true Grace and Virtue, as if we were to be ſaved by it, and yet by no Confidence in it, but ſtill look upon our ſelves as unprofitable Servants, and depend upon Chriſt, and Chriſt alone, for Pardon and Salvation.

I ſuppoſe I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform ſuch Duties, and to act ſuch Graces as theſe are; but this let me tell the Reader, that how hard, how difficult ſoever it is, it muſt be done if ever we deſign to come to Heaven, and by conſequence it is no eaſie matter to come thither. Seeing therefore the way that leads to Heaven is thus narrow, and hard, it is no wonder that there are but few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour himſelf aſſures us; for People generally love to ſwim with the Stream, to run with the Multitude, though it be into the Gulph of Sin and Miſery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow Way, and keeping himſelf within thoſe Bounds and Limits wherewith it is incloſed; and this ſeems to have been the Occaſion of theſe Words in the Goſpel of St. *Luke*, where one ſaid unto Chriſt,

Lord,

Lord, are there few that be ſaved? and our Saviour anſwered in theſe Words, *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate. For many I ſay unto you will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able,* Luke 13. 23, 24. Intimating not only that there are but few that ſhall be ſaved, but likewiſe that many of thoſe that ſeek to be ſaved ſhall not attain it; not as if any of thoſe who really and cordially made it their buſineſs to look after Heaven, can ever miſs of it; but that many of thoſe who preſuming upon their ſeeming Obedience and good Works, ſhall think and ſeek that Way to enter into the Kingdom of God, *ſhall not be able. For many will ſay unto me at that day,* ſaith he, *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profeſs unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity,* Matt. 7. 22, 23. And if many of thoſe who are great Profeſſors of Religion, and make a plauſible ſhew of Piety in the World, ſhall notwithſtanding come ſhort of eternal Happineſs, and if of thoſe *many which are called there are but few choſen,* Matt. 20. 16. we may well conclude there are but few, but very few indeed that walk in the narrow Path that leads to Life, in compariſon of thoſe innumerable

merable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to Ruin and Deſtruction. One great Reaſon whereof is, becauſe Men generally, though they deſire to go to Heaven, yet will not believe it to be ſo hard a thing as really it is, to get thither; and therefore ſetting aſide the ſuperficial Performance of ſome few external Duties, they give themſelves no trouble, nor take any Pains about it; as if Heaven was ſo contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look after it; or howſoever, as if it was ſo eaſie a thing to attain it, that they cannot miſs of it whether they look after it or no. Whereas queſtionleſs, as Heaven is the greateſt Happineſs that we are capable of, ſo is it the hardeſt matter in the World for any of us to attain it.

I ſay not this to diſcourage any one, but rather to excite and encourage all to a greater Care and Diligence in the Proſecution of eternal Happineſs, than ordinarily Men ſeem to have. It is my hearty Deſire and Prayer that every Soul among us may live and be happy for ever; but that we can never be, unleſs we be ſerious, earneſt and conſtant in looking after it, more than after all things in the World beſides. And therefore it is that I have endeavoured to convince Men that it is not ſo eaſie a thing

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none ſhould e'er come thither, then indeed it would be in vain for us to expect it, or to uſe any means to attain unto it; but ſeeing many of our Brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the ſtraitneſs of the Gate, the narrowneſs of the Way, or the difficulty of getting thither, ſhould never diſcourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us the more diligent in the proſecution of it: Eſpecially conſidering in the next place, that we are not only as yet in a capacity of getting to Heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himſelf; for he would have all Men to be ſaved, and *to come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. Yea, he hath ſworn by himſelf, ſaying, *As I live ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live*; and therefore calls upon us all, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezek. 33. 11. Hence it is that he ſent his Prophets to invite us, *Ho, every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters*, Iſa. 55. 1. Yea, he came down in his own Perſon to Earth, on purpoſe to invite us to Heaven, and to direct us the way thither, *Come to me*, ſaith

he, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Mat. 11. 29. *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, Joh. 3. 16. Whence we may obſerve, that there is no exceptions made againſt any Perſon whatſoever, nor by conſequence againſt any of us. It is the will, yea and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil ways and live, and that every Soul amongſt us walk in that narrow way that leads unto eternal Bliſs; and therefore if any of us do periſh, *Our blood will be upon our own heads, our deſtruction is from our ſelves*, Hoſ. 13. 9. For it is nothing but the perverſeneſs of our own Wills, and the hardneſs, pride and obſtinacy of our own Hearts, that can keep any Soul of us out of Heaven, howſoever difficult it is to come thither. For God hath ſhewn how deſirous he is to have our Company there, in that he is ſtill pleaſed to grant us both the ſpace and means of Repentance. If he had no mind to have us ſaved, he could have ſhut us up long ago in Hell; but he is ſo far from that, that he doth not only as yet continue our abode on earth, and lengthen our Tranquillity here, but he ſtill vouchſafes unto us whatſoever is neceſſary, yea whatſoever can any ways conduce to

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our eternal Happineſs; we have his Scriptures, we have his Sabbaths, we have his Ordinances, we have his Sacraments, we have his Miniſters, we have the promiſe of his Spirit, we have the overtures of Chriſt, and of all the merits of his Death and Paſſion made unto us, and what can be deſired more to make Men happy? And yet as if all this had not been enough, he ſtill continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea and beſeeching us moſt affectionately to turn that our Souls may live; for we his Miniſters, are Embaſſadors to Mankind for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; *We pray you in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. And he hath ſent me unto you that read this in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to Death, into the narrow way that leads to Life and Happineſs; *In his name therefore I exhort, yea and beſeech you by the mercies of God, that you preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reaſonable ſervice*, Rom. 12. 1. *Strive to enter in at the the ſtrait gate*, and never leave untill you have got poſſeſſion of eternal Glory.

Nor let us be diſcouraged at any Difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will ſoon be over howſoever hard and

difficult any Duty may ſeem at firſt, by Uſe and Cuſtom it will ſoon grow eaſie. The worſt is at firſt ſetting out, when once we have been uſed a while to walk in this narrow way, we ſhall find it to be both eaſie and pleaſant: For as the wiſe Man tells us, The ways of Wiſdom or true Piety, *are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace*, Prov. 3. 17. Though it be rough at firſt, by treading it will ſoon grow plain, we ſhall ſoon find the Words of Chriſt to be true, that his *yoke is eaſie, and his burden light*, Matt. 11. 39. All is, but to be willing and obedient, and reſolved upon it, to preſs through all Duties and Difficulties whatſoever to get to Heaven, and then by the Merits of Chriſt's Paſſion, and the Aſſiſtance of his Grace, we need not fear but we ſhall come thither.

And verily although the way to Heaven ſhould prove not only narrow, but hedg'd in with Bryars and Thorns, ſo that we ſhould meet with nothing but Croſſes and Troubles in our going to it, yet Heaven will make amends for all. For we may well reckon with the Apoſtle, *that the ſufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18. So that whatſoever Pains we are at, whatſoever Trouble we ſuffer in order to our attaining everlaſting

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ing Happineſs, bears no proportion at all to the Happineſs we attain by it; which is ſo great, ſo exceeding great that our Tongues can neither expreſs, nor our Minds as yet conceive it, conſiſting not only in the freedom from all Evil, but alſo in the enjoyment of whatſoever is really and truly Good; even whatſoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and compleatly happy: So that no Duty can be too great to undertake, no Trouble too heavy to undergo for it. *Wherefore*, that I may uſe the words of the Apoſtle to my Readers, *my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

By this time I hope we are all reſolved within our ſelves, to follow our Saviour's Counſel and Advice, even *to ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, and *to walk in that narrow way that leads to Life*. If we be not, we have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect our ſelves to be in the Gall of Bitterneſs and in the Bond of Iniquity; but if we be reſolved in good earneſt, we cannot but be very ſolicitous to know what we muſt do in order to it; or how every one

of us may *enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, ſo as to be happy for ever? A Queſtion of the higheſt importance imaginable: So that it is abſolutely neceſſary for every Soul amongſt us to be thoroughly reſolved in it; for it concerns our Life, our immortal and eternal Life, and therefore I ſhall endeavour to reſolve it in as few and perſpicuous terms as poſſibly I can, that the meaneſt Capacity may underſtand it. But I muſt take leave to ſay beforehand, that our knowing of it will ſignifie nothing, unleſs we practiſe it, neither will you be ever the nearer Heaven, becauſe you know the way to it, unleſs you alſo walk in it.

And therefore the firſt thing that I ſhall propound, in order to our eternal Salvation, is, that we would reſolve immediately in the Preſence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, ſtudy and buſineſs in this World, to *ſeek the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof* in the firſt place, according to our Saviour's Advice and Command, *Matt.* 6. 33. that we would not halt any longer between two Opinions, and think to ſeek Heaven and Earth together, things diametrically oppoſite to one another. If we really think Earth to be better than Hea-

Heaven, what need we trouble our ſelves any farther, than to heap up the Riches, and to enjoy the Pleaſures of this World: But if we really think Heaven to be better than Earth, as all wiſe Men muſt needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not our ſelves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, *No man can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or elſe he will hold with the one and deſpiſe the other: you cannot ſerve God and Mammon*, Matth. 7. 24. that is, in plain Engliſh, we cannot mind Heaven and Earth both together; for we can have but one grand and principal deſign in the World, and therefore if our principal deſign be to get Wealth or any earthly Enjoyment, we deceive our ſelves, if we think that we mind Heaven at all. For that we can never properly be ſaid to do, until we mind it before all things whatſoever in the World beſides; and let us not ſay, or think within our ſelves, *that this is an hard ſaying*, for we may aſſure our ſelves it is no more than what we ſhall all find to be really true, and that never a Soul of us ſhall ever know what Heaven is, that doth not firſt prefer it before all things here below, and by conſequence make it his principal, if not only deſign to get thither.

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Suppoſing us therefore to be thus reſolved within our ſelves, my next Advice is, that we break off our former Sins by Repentance and ſhewing Mercy to the Poor, and that for the future we live not in the wilful commiſſion of any known Sin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known Duty. Where it is evident I adviſe to no more than what all Men know themſelves to be obliged to do; for I dare ſay, there is none of us knows ſo little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we our ſelves know to be Sin, and do what we know to be our Duty, and though our knowledge may not be ſo great as others, yet our Piety may be greater and our Condition better. But we muſt ſtill remember, that one Sin will keep us out of Heaven as well as twenty; and therefore if we ever deſire to come thither, we muſt not only do ſome or many things, but all things whatſoever is required of us, to the beſt of our knowledge. I ſpeak not this of my ſelf, but Chriſt himſelf hath told us the ſame before, even that we muſt keep the Commandments, all the Commandments, if we deſire to enter into eternal Life, *Matth.* 19. 16, 17. Not as if it was in-

indiſpenſably neceſſary to obſerve every Punctilio and Circumſtance of the Moral Law, for then no Man could be ſaved; but that it muſt be both our ſteadfaſt Reſolution, and our chief Study and Endeavour to avoid whatſoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatſoever we know to be commanded by God.

And though by this we ſhall make a fair progreſs in the narrow way to Life, yet there is ſtill another ſtep behind, before we can enter in at the ſtrait Gate, and that is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as our Saviour himſelf hath taught us, *Mat.* 19. 21. The ſum of which Duty in brief is this, That when we have done all we can in obedience to the Moral Law, yet we muſt ſtill look upon our ſelves as unprofitable Servants, and not expect to be juſtified or ſaved by vertue of that Obedience, but only by the Merits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion; humbly confiding, that in and through him, the defects of our Obedience ſhall be remitted, our Perſons accepted, our Natures cleanſed, and our Souls eternally ſaved. This is not only the principal but the only thing which *Paul* and *Silas* directed the Keeper of the Priſon to, in order to his Salvation, as comprehending all the reſt under

under it, or at leaſt ſuppoſing them, *Acts* 16. 31.

Thus therefore, though Obedience be the way, Faith is the Gate through which we muſt enter into Life. But ſeeing the Gate is ſtrait as well as the Way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Chriſt as to obſerve the Law, we muſt not think to do either by our own Strength, but ſtill implore the Aid and Aſſiſtance of Almighty God, and depend upon him for it. For Chriſt himſelf ſaith, *No man can come to me except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him*, John 6. 44. But we can never expect that he ſhould draw us, unleſs we deſire it of him. And therefore it muſt be our daily Prayer and Petition at the Throne of Grace, that God would vouchſafe us his eſpecial Grace and Aſſiſtance, without which I cannot ſee how any one that knows his own Heart, can expect to be ſaved. But our Comfort is, if we do what we can God will hear our Prayers, and enable us to do what otherwiſe we cannot; for he never yet did, nor ever will fail any Man that ſincerely endeavours to ſerve and honour him.

Laſtly, Although we are to truſt in God for the Anſwer of our Prayers in this

this Particular, yet we muſt not expect that he ſhould do it immediately from himſelf, but we muſt uſe thoſe means which himſelf hath appointed whereby to work Faith, and by conſequence all other Graces in us. Now the Scriptures tell us that Faith comes by hearing, *Rom.* 10. 17. Wherefore if we deſire to believe, ſo as to be ſaved, we muſt wait upon God in his publick Ordinances, and there expect ſuch Influences of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow Way, and enter in at the ſtrait Gate that leads to Life.

Thus I have ſhewn you in few terms, how to do the great Work which you came into the World about, even how to get to Heaven. For howſoever hard it is to come thither, let us but reſolve, as we have ſeen, to mind it before all things elſe, fear God and keep his Commands to the utmoſt of our Power, believe in Chriſt for the pardon of our Sins, and the acceptance both of our Perſons and Performances; pray ſincerely unto God, and wait diligently upon him for the aſſiſtance of his Grace, to do what he requires from us: Let us do this, and we need not fear but our Souls ſhall live. If we leave this undone we our ſelves ſhall be undone for ever.

ever. And therefore let me adviſe all to dally no longer in a matter of ſuch conſequence as this is, but now we know the way to Heaven to turn immediately into it, and walk conſtantly in it. Though the Way be narrow it is not long, and though the Gate be ſtrait, it opens into eternal Life. And therefore to conclude, Let us remember we have now been told how to get to Heaven, it is not in my Power to force Men thither whether they will or no, I can only ſhew them the way. It is their Intereſt as well as Duty to walk in it, which if they do I dare aſſure them, in the Name of Chriſt, it is not long but they will be admitted into the Choir of Heaven, to ſing Halleluja's for evermore.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS

UPON

The Imitation of Chriſt.

IF we ſeriouſly conſider with our ſelves that Wonder of all Wonders, that Myſtery of all Myſteries, the Incarnation of the Son of God, it may juſtly ſtrike us into Aſtoniſhment, and an Admiration what ſhould be the reaſon and the end of it; why the Great and Glorious, the Almighty and Eternal God, ſhould take our weak and finite Nature into his infinite and incomprehenſible Perſon; why the Creator of all things ſhould himſelf become a Creature; and he that made the World be himſelf made into it; why the ſupreme Being of all Beings, that gives Eſſence and Exiſtence to all things in the World, whoſe Glory the Heaven of Heavens is not able

to

to contain, ſhould cloath himſelf with Fleſh and become Man, of the ſelf-ſame Nature and Subſtance with us, who live and move and have our Being in him! Certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the moſt high God manifeſted himſelf to the Sons of Men in ſo wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But he did it queſtionleſs upon ſome Deſign that was as great and glorious as the Act it ſelf. And if we would know what his End and Deſign in coming into the World was, the Scripture aſſures us in general, that it was for the Salvation of Mankind, whoſe Nature he aſſumed: *For this is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. And he himſelf tells us, *That God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, Joh. 3. 16. Now for the accompliſhment of this no leſs glorious than gracious Deſign, there are two things which it was neceſſary he ſhould do for us, whilſt he was upon Earth, even expiate our former Sins, and direct unto Holineſs for the future; both which he hath effected for us: The one by his Death, and the other by his Life.

For,

For by his Death he hath paid that Debt which we owed to God, having made compleat Satisfaction to God's Juſtice for thoſe Sins, whereby we have incurred his Diſpleaſure: For Death was threatned to all Mankind in caſe of Diſobedience, and by conſequence all Mankind being diſobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it ſtand with the Juſtice of God, to falſify his Word, nor yet with his Glory, to put up the Injuries that we have committed againſt him, without having ſatisfaction made unto him for them. But it being impoſſible that a finite Creature ſhould ſatisfie for thoſe Sins which were committed againſt the infinite God: Hence the infinite God himſelf was pleaſed to undertake it for us, even to ſatisfie himſelf for thoſe Sins which were committed againſt him; which he did, by undergoing that Death which he had threatned to us in our own Nature, united to the Perſon of his own and only Son, God co-equal, co-eſſential, co-eternal with himſelf, who is therefore ſaid *to be a propitiation for our ſins*, 1 John 2. 2. Neither can there any reaſon imaginable be alledged, why the Son of God himſelf ſhould ſuffer Death, un-

leſs it was upon our account, and in our ſtead, whoſe Nature he aſſumed, and in which he ſuffered it. But not to inſiſt upon that now. The human Nature in general, having thus ſuffered that Death in the Perſon of the Son of God, which all Mankind was otherwiſe bound to have undergone in their own Perſons; hence it comes to paſs, that we are all in a Capacity of avoiding that Death which we have deſerved by our Sins, if we do but rightly believe in Chriſt, and apply his Sufferings to our ſelves.

And as Chriſt by his Death and Paſſions hath thus ſatisfied for our Sins, ſo hath he by his Life and Actions given us an exact Pattern of true Piety and Virtue. And although I cannot ſay it was the only, yet queſtionleſs one great End wherefore he continu'd ſo long on Earth, and converſed ſo much amongſt Men, and that ſo many of his Actions are delivered to us with ſo many Circumſtances as they are, was, that we by his Example, might learn how to carry and behave our ſelves in this lower World. For as from that time to this, ſo from the beginning of the World to that time, there

there had been never a Man upon the face of the Earth, that had lived ſo conformably to the Law of God, that it was ſafe or lawful for another to follow him in all things. For all Fleſh was corrupt, and the very beſt of Men were ſtill but Men, ſubject to failures in their Lives as well as to Errors in their Judgments; yea thoſe very Perſons whom the Scriptures record, and God himſelf atteſteth to have been eminent in their Generations for Piety and Juſtice, did oftentimes fail in both. *Noah* is aſſerted by God himſelf to have been righteous in his Generation, *Abraham* to be the Father of the Faithful, *Moſes* to be the meekeſt Man upon Earth, *David* to be a Man after God's own Heart, *Solomon* to have been the wiſeſt Man that ever liv'd, and *Job* to be a *perfect and upright Man, one that feared God and eſchewed Evil*: Yet none of theſe moſt excellent Perſons but had their Vices as well as Virtues: And it is obſervable, that the more eminent any were in Piety, the more notorious Sins God hath ſometimes ſuffered them to ſlip into, to keep them humble. So that from the firſt to the ſecond *Adam*, there never lived a Man of whom it could be

ſaid, This Man never ſinned, never tranſgreſſed the Laws of God, and therefore may in all things be imitated by Men.

But now as the Firſt was made, the ſecond *Adam* continued all along moſt pure and perfect, both in Thought, Word and Action: For he did *no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet 2. 22. Never ſo much as a vain Thought ever ſprang up in his moſt holy Heart, not ſo much as an idle Word ever proceeded out of his divine Lips, nor ſo much as an impertinent or frivolous Action was ever performed by his ſacred and moſt righteous Hands; his whole Life being nothing elſe but one continued Act of Piety towards God, Juſtice towards Men, Love and Charity towards all. And as himſelf lived, ſo would he have all his Diſciples live whilſt they are here below; and therefore enjoyns them that go after him, not only to deny themſelves, and take up their Croſſes, but alſo to follow, or imitate him, unto the utmoſt of their Power in their Life and Actions. So that he now expects that all thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be his Diſciples, do firſt deny themſelves whatſoever is offenſive unto him; and then

then that they take up their Croſs ſo as to be ready and willing to do or ſuffer any thing for him, that hath done and ſuffered ſo much as he hath for us. And then laſtly, that they write after the Copy that he hath ſet them, and walk in the Steps wherein he is gone before them; even that they follow him through all Duties and Difficulties whatſoever, ſo as ſtill to do unto the utmoſt of their Power as he did, otherwiſe they in vain pretend to be his Diſciples. *For he that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to walk even as he walked*, 1 John 2. 6. that is, he that profeſſeth to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould live as he lived while he was upon Earth. Hence St. *Paul*, a true Diſciple of Chriſt ſaith, *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 11. 1. As he followed Chriſt, he would have others to follow him; but he would have them follow him no farther than as he followed Chriſt.

It is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Chriſt's being ſo or no, the Law of God firſt obliging us to be ſo; but howſoever, we have now an additional Obligation upon us to be

holy, *As he who hath called us was holy in all maner of converſation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. For the Scripture tells us expreſly, that *Chriſt hath left us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps*, 1 Pet. 2. 21. And our Saviour himſelf commands all that come to him to learn of him, *Matt.* 11. 29, 30. And therefore we can never expect that he ſhould own us for his Diſciples, unleſs we own him for our Lord and Maſter, ſo far as to obey and follow him; he having commanded all thoſe that come to him, to deny themſelves, take up their Croſſes and follow him. And ſeeing we all, I hope, deſire to be Chriſtians indeed, as I have explained the two former of theſe Duties, I ſhall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter too, that we may all ſo follow Chriſt here, as to come to him hereafter.

Now for the opening of this, we muſt know that we neither can or ought to follow Chriſt in every thing he did when he was here below; for even whilſt he was here below, he was ſtill the moſt high and mighty God, the ſame that he had been from Eternity, and often manifeſted his Power and Glory to the Sons of Men, whilſt he was converſing with them in their own Natures, where-

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in it would be horrid Preſumption for us to pretend to follow him. As for example, *He knew the very thoughts of men*, Matt. 12. 25. which I ſuppoſe is ſomething paſt our Skill to do. Hence alſo he judged and cenſured others, *Wo unto you*, ſaith he, *Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto painted ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead mens bones and of all uncleanneſs* Matt. 23. 27, 28. But this we could not do though we might, not being able to ſearch into others Hearts, neither may we do it though we could, Chriſt himſelf having expreſly commanded us the contrary, ſaying, *Judge not that ye be not judged*, Mat. 7. 1. Our Saviour alſo as God foretold future Events, *Luke* 21. 6. and wrought Miracles, ſuch as were clear Demonſtrations of his infinite Power and Godhead; but in this he is to be believed and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus alſo when he ſent his Diſciples to looſe another Man's Colt, and bring him away, *Luke* 19.30. that he did as Lord and Sovereign of the World, or as the ſupreme Poſſeſſor and univerſal Proprietor of all things; as when he commanded the *Iſraelites* to

ſpoil the *Egyptians*, and carry away their Jewels and Raiment, for all things being his, he may give them to whom he pleaſeth; and though it would have been a Sin to have taken them away without his Command, yet his Command gave them a Propriety in them, a Right and Title to them, and they had ſinned unleſs they had obeyed the Command. So here, our Saviour ſent for the Colt, as if it had been his own, for ſo really it was, as he is God, which he manifeſted himſelf to be at the ſame time, in that he inclined the Hearts of the civil Owners thereof to let him go, only upon the Diſciples ſaying *that the Lord had need of him*, Luke 19. 33, 34. But this he did not for our Example, but to ſhew forth his own Power and Glory.

There are ſome things alſo which our bleſſed Saviour did as God-man, or as the Mediator betwixt God and Man, as his making attonement and ſatisfaction for the Sins of Mankind, his inſtituting Offices and Ordinances, and Sacraments in his Church, and the like; which having an immediate reſpect to his Office of Mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate him in ſuch things. But the things which

which he would have us to follow him in, are ſuch and ſuch only as he did as mere Man, that had no immediate dependence upon or reference to either his Godhead or Mediatorſhip. For he having honoured our Nature ſo far, as to take it into his own divine Perſon, ſo as to become really and truly Man; as ſo, he did whatſoever Man is bound to do, both as to God himſelf, and likewiſe as to Men. And being abſolutely perfect in all the Faculties of his Soul, and Members of his Body, he infinitely ſurpaſſed all other Men both in divine Graces, and moral Virtues, ſo that as he never committed any one Sin, ſo neither did he ever neglect any one Duty, which as Man he was bound to perform either to God or Men, but ſtill obſerved every Punctilio and Circumſtance of the Moral Law; by which means he hath left us a compleat Pattern of true and univerſal Holineſs, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

Hoping therefore that all who profeſs themſelves to be the Friends and Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, deſire to manifeſt themſelves to be ſo, by following both his Precepts and Example, I ſhall give the Reader a ſhort Narrative of his Life and Actions, wherein we may all ſee what

what true Piety is, and what real Chriſtianity requires of us; and may not content our ſelves, as many do, with being Profeſſors, and adhering to Parties or Factions amongſt us, but ſtrive to be thorow Chriſtians, and to carry our ſelves as ſuch, by walking as Chriſt himſelf walked; which that we may at leaſt know how to do, looking upon Chriſt as a mere Man, I ſhall ſhew how he did, and by conſequence how we ought to carry our ſelves both to God and Man, and what Graces and Virtues he exerciſed all along for our Example and Imitation.

Now for our more clear, and methodical proceeding, in a matter of ſuch Conſequence as this is, I ſhall begin with his Behaviour towards Men, from his Childhood to his Death.

Firſt therefore, when he was a Child of twelve Years of Age, it is particularly recorded of him, that he was ſubject or obedient to his Parents, his real Mother and reputed Father, *Luke* 2. 51. It is true, he knew at that time that God himſelf was his Father, for, ſaid he, *wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Father's Buſineſs*, ver. 49. And knowing God to be his Father, he could not but know like-

likewiſe that he was infinitely above his Mother; yea, that ſhe could never have born him, had not he himſelf firſt made and ſupported her. Yet howſoever, though as God he was Father to her, yet as Man ſhe was Mother to him; and therefore he honoured and obeyed both her and him to whom ſhe was eſpouſed. Neither did he only reſpect his Mother whilſt he was here, but he took Care of her too when he was going hence. Yea, all the Pains that he ſuffered upon the Croſs could not make him forget his Duty to her that bore him; but ſeeing her ſtanding by the Croſs, as himſelf hung on it, he committed her to the Care of his beloved Diſciple, who *took her to his own home*, Joh. 19. 27. Now as our Saviour did, ſo are we bound to carry our ſelves to our earthly Parents, whatſoever their Temper or Condition be in this World. Though God hath bleſſed ſome of us perhaps with greater Eſtates than ever he bleſſed them, yet we muſt not think our ſelves above them, nor be at all the leſs reſpectful to them. Chriſt, we ſee, was infinitely above his Mother, yet as ſhe was his Mother, he was both ſubject and reſpectful to her. He was not aſhamed

ſhamed to own her as ſhe ſtood by the Croſs, but in the view and hearing of all there preſent, gave his Diſciple a Charge to take Care of her; leaving us an Example, that ſuch amongſt us as have Parents, provide for them if they need it, as well as for our Children, both while we live and when we come to die.

And as he was to his natural, ſo was he too to his civil Parents the Magiſtrates under which he lived, ſubmiſſive and faithful; for though as he was God he was infinitely above them in Heaven, yet as he was Man he was below them on Earth, having committed all Civil Power into their hands, without reſerving any at all for himſelf. So that tho' they received their Commiſſion from him, yet now himſelf could not act without receiving a Commiſſion from them. And therefore having no Commiſſion from them to do it, he would not entrench ſo much upon their Privilege and Power, as to determine the Controverſie betwixt the two Brethren contending about their Inheritance; *Man*, ſaith he, *who made me a judge or a divider over you?* Luke 12. 14. And to ſhew his Submiſſion to the Civil Magiſtrate,

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as highly as poſſibly he could, rather than offend them, he wrought a Miracle to pay the Tax which they had charged upon him, *Matth.* 17. 27. And when the Officers were ſent to take him, tho' he had more than twelve Legions of Angels at his Service to have fought for him if he had pleaſed, yet he would not employ them, nor ſuffer his own Diſciples to make any Reſiſtance, *Matth.* 26. 52, 53. And though ſome of late Days, who called themſelves Chriſtians, have acted quite contrary to our Bleſſed Saviour in this Particular, I hope better things of my Readers, even that they will behave themſelves more like to Chriſt, who though he was the ſupream Governor of the World, yet would not reſiſt, but ſubmitted to the Civil Power, which himſelf had entruſted Men withal.

Moreover, although whilſt he was here, he was really not only the beſt but greateſt Man upon Earth, yet he carried himſelf to others with that Meekneſs, Humility, and Reſpect, as if he had been the leaſt; as he never admired any Man for his Riches, ſo neither did he deſpiſe any Man for his Poverty; the poor Man and rich were all alike to him. He was as lowly and reſpectful to the loweſt as he

he was to the higheſt that he converſed with. He affected no Titles of Honour, nor gaped after popular Air, but ſubmitted himſelf to the meaneſt Services that he could for the Good of others, even to the waſhing his own Diſciples Feet, and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of our ſelves, nor do any thing that is beneath us; propounding himſelf as our Example, eſpecially in this Particular, *Learn of me*, ſaith he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matt. 11. 29.

His Humility alſo was the more remarkable, in that his Bounty and Goodneſs to others was ſo great, for he *went about*, *doing good*, Acts 10. 38. Whereſoever you read he was, you ſtill read of ſome good Work or other which he did there. Whatſoever Company he converſed with, they ſtill went better from him than they came unto him, if they came out of a good end. By him, as himſelf ſaid, the Blind received their ſight, and the Lame walked, the Lepers were cleanſed, and the Deaf heard, the Dead were raiſed up, and the Poor had the Goſpel preached unto them, *Matth.* 11. 5. Yea, it is obſervable, that we never read of any Perſon whatſoever that came

came unto him, deſiring any real Kindneſs or Favour of him, but he ſtill received it, and that whether he was Friend or Foe. For indeed, though he had many inveterate and implacable Enemies in the World, yet he bare no Grudge or Malice againſt them, but expreſſed as much Love and Favour to them as to his greateſt Friends. Inſomuch that when they had gotten him upon the Croſs, and faſtened his Hands and Feet unto it, in the midſt of all that Pain and Torment which they put him to, he ſtill prayed for them, *Luc.* 23. 34.

Oh! How happy, how bleſſed a People ſhould we be, could we but follow our bleſſed Saviour in this Particular! How well would it be with us, could we but be thus good and loving to one another, as Chriſt was to all, even his moſt bitter Enemies! We may aſſure our ſelves it is not only our Miſery, but our Sin too, unleſs we be ſo. And our Sin will be the greater, now we know our Maſter's Pleaſure, unleſs we do it. And therefore let all ſuch amongſt us, as deſire to carry our ſelves as Chriſt himſelf did, and as becometh his Diſciples in the World, begin here.

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Be ſubmiſſive and obedient both to our Parents and Governors, humble in our own ſight, deſpiſe none, but be charitable, loving, and good to all. By this ſhall all Men know that we are Chriſt's Diſciples indeed.

Having thus ſeen our Saviour's Carriage towards Men, we ſhall now conſider his Piety and Devotion towards God, not as if it was poſſible for me to expreſs the Excellency and Perfection of thoſe religious Acts which he performed continually within his Soul to God, every one of his Faculties being as entire in it ſelf, and as perfect in its Acts, as it was firſt made or deſigned to be. There was no darkneſs, nor ſo much as gloomineſs in his Mind, no error or miſtake in his Judgment, no bribery or corruption in his Conſcience, no obſtinacy or preverſeneſs in his Will, no irregularity nor diſorder in his Affections, no ſpot, no blot, no blemiſh, not the leaſt imperfection or infirmity in his whole Soul. And therefore even whilſt his Body was on Earth, his Head and Heart were ſtill in Heaven. For he never troubled his Head, nor ſo much as concerned himſelf about any thing here below, any farther than to do all the Good he could, his thoughts being

ing wholly taken up with conſidering how to advance God's Glory and Man's eternal Happineſs. And as for his Heart, that was the Altar on which the ſacred Fire of divine Love was always burning, the flames whereof continually aſcended up to Heaven, being accompanied with the moſt ardent and fervent Deſires of, and Delight in, the chiefeſt Good.

But it muſt not be expected that I ſhould give an exact Deſcription of that eminent and moſt perfect Holineſs which our bleſſed Saviour was inwardly adorned with, and continually employed in; which I am as unable to expreſs, as deſirous to imitate. But howſoever, I ſhall endeavour to mind the Reader in general of ſuch Acts of Piety and Devotion, which are particularly recorded, on purpoſe for our Imitation.

Firſt therefore, it is obſerved of our Saviour, that from a Child he increaſed in Wiſdom, as he did in Stature, *Luke* 2. 52. Where by Wiſdom we are to underſtand the Knowledge of God, and of divine things. For our Saviour having taken our Nature into his Perſon, with all its Frailties and Infirmities, as it is a created Being, he did not in that Nature

preſently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, he then knew all things as well as he had from all Eternity. But we are now ſpeaking of him as a Man, like one of us in all things except Sin. But we continue ſome conſiderable time after we are born before we know any thing, or come to the uſe of our Reaſons; the rational Soul not being able to exert or manifeſt it ſelf, until the natural Phlegm and radical moiſture of the Body, which in Infants is predominant, be ſo digeſted, that the Body be rightly qualified, and its Organs fitted for the Soul to work upon and to make uſe of. And though our Saviour queſtionleſs came to the uſe of his Reaſon, as Man, far ſooner than we are wont to do, yet we muſt not think that he knew all things as ſoon as he was born; for that the Nature he aſſumed was not capable of; neither could he then be ſaid, as he is, to encreaſe in Wiſdom, for where there is a Perfection there can be no Encreaſe.

But here before we proceed farther, it will be neceſſary to anſwer an Objection which ſome may make againſt this. For if our Saviour as Man knew not all things, then he was not perfect,

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nor abſolutely free from Sin, Ignorance it ſelf being a Sin.

To this I have theſe things to anſwer, firſt, It is no Sin for a Creature to be ignorant of ſome things, becauſe it is impoſſible for a Creature to know all things; for to be omniſcient is God's Prerogative, neither is a Creature capable of it, becauſe he is but finite, whereas the knowledge of all things, or Omniſcience, is it ſelf an infinite Act, and therefore to be performed only by an infinite Being. Hence it is that no Creature in the World ever was or ever could be made Omniſcient, but there are many things which *Adam* in his Integrity, and the very Angels themſelves are ignorant of; as our Saviour ſpeaking of the Day of Judgment, ſaith, *Of that day and hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father,* Mark 13. 32. But the Angels are never the leſs perfect becauſe they know not this. Nay, it is obſervable, that the Son himſelf as Man knew it not, *neither,* ſaith he, *the Son, but the Father*; and if he knew it not then, much leſs was it neceſſary for him to know it when a Child.

Secondly, As to be ignorant of ſome things, is no Sin, ſo neither is any Ignorance at all ſin, but that whereby a Man is ignorant of what he is bound to know; *For all ſin is the tranſgreſſion of a law.* And therefore if there be no Law obliging me to know ſuch or ſuch things, I do not ſin by being ignorant of them, for I tranſgreſs no Law. Now though all Men are bound by the Law of God to know him, and their Duty to him, yet Infants, ſo long as Infants, are not, neither can be obnoxious or ſubject to that Law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea impoſſibility to perform it, but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged queſtionleſs to know him firſt, from whom they receive their knowledge.

And thus it was that our bleſſed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, in that although he might ſtill continue ignorant of many things; yet howſoever he all along knew all that he was bound to know, and as he grew by degrees more and more capable of knowing any thing, ſo did he increaſe ſtill more in true Wiſdom, or in the knowledge of God; ſo that by that time he was twelve years old, he was able to diſpute with the

the great Doctors and learned Rabbies amongſt the Jews; and after that as he grew in Stature, ſo did he grow in Wiſdom too, and in favour both with God and Man.

And verily, although we did not follow our bleſſed Saviour in this particular when we were Children, we ought howſoever to endeavour it now we are Men and Women, even to grow in Wiſdom, and every day add ſomething to our ſpiritual ſtature, ſo as to let never a day paſs over our heads, without being better acquainted with God's goodneſs to us, or our Duty to him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in Wiſdom when a Child, we ſhould alſo learn to bring up our Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and not ſtrive ſo much to make them rich, as to uſe all means to make them wiſe and good, that they may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wiſdom and in ſtature, and in the favour both of God and Man.

And as our Saviour grew in wiſdom when a Child, ſo did he uſe and manifeſt it when he came to be a Man, by devoting himſelf wholly unto the ſervice of the living God, and to the exerciſe of all

true Grace and Virtue, wherein his bleſſed Soul was ſo much taken up, that he had neither time nor heart to mind thoſe toys and trifles which ſilly Mortals upon Earth are ſo much apt to dote on. It is true all the World was his, but he had given it all away to others, not reſerving for himſelf ſo much as an Houſe to put his head in, *Mat.* 8. 20. And what Mony he had hoarded up, you may gather from his working a Miracle to pay his Tribute or Poll Mony, which came not to much above a Shilling. Indeed he came into the World and went out again, without ever taking any notice of any Pleaſures, Honours or Riches in it, as if there had been no ſuch thing here, as really there was not, nor ever will be; all the Pomp and Glory of this deceitful World having no other Being or Exiſtence, but only in our diſtempered Fancies and Imaginations, and therefore our Saviour, whoſe Fancy was ſound, and his Imagination untainted, looked upon all the World and the Glory of it as not worthy to be looked upon, ſeeing nothing in it wherefore it ſhould be deſired. And therefore inſtead of ſpending his time in the childiſh purſuit of Clouds and Shadows, he made

made the Service of God not only his Buſineſs, but his Recreation too, his Food as well as Work. *It is my meat* ſaith he, *to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his work*, Joh. 4. 34. This was all the Riches, Honours and Pleaſures which he ſought for in the World, even to do the Will of him that ſent him hither, and to finiſh the Work which he came about, and ſo he did before he went away; *Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou ſenteſt me to do*, Joh. 17. 4. If therefore we would be Chriſt's Diſciples, ſo as to follow him, we ſee what we muſt do, and how we muſt behave and carry our ſelves whilſt we are here below; we muſt not ſpend our time, not throw away our precious and ſhort lived Days upon the trifles and impertinences of this tranſient World, as if we came hither for nothing elſe but to rake and ſcrape up a little duſt and dirt together, or to wallow our ſelves like Swine in the mire of carnal Pleaſures and Delights. No; we may aſſure our ſelves we have greater things to do, and far more noble Deſigns to carry on whilſt we continue in this vale of Tears, even *to work out our Salvation with fear*

and trembling, and to make our calling and election ſure, and to ſerve God here, ſo as to enjoy him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we muſt not only do, but do it too with pleaſure and delight, and never leave untill we have accompliſh'd it; we muſt make it our only Pleaſure to pleaſe God, account it our only Honour to honour him, and eſteem his love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy; we muſt think our ſelves no farther happy, than we find our ſelves to be truly holy, and therefore devote our Lives wholly to him, in whom we live. This is to live as Chriſt lived, and by conſequence as Chriſtians ought to do.

I might here inſtance in ſeveral other Acts of Piety and Devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exerciſed himſelf in, as his humble and perfect Submiſſion and Reſignation of his own will to God's, his moſt ardent Love unto him, and Zeal for him, as alſo his firm and ſtedfaſt Truſt and Confidence on him; ſo that nothing could ever diſquiet or diſcompoſe his Mind, but ſtill his Heart was fixed, truſting in the Lord. In all which, it is

both

both our Duty and Intereſt to follow him, our Happineſs as well as Holineſs conſiſting in our dependence upon God, and Inclinations to him.

But we ſhould do well to obſerve withal, that our Saviour performed external as well as inward Worſhip and Devotion unto God; particularly we often find him praiſing God and praying unto him, and that with his Eyes lift up to Heaven in a moſt humble and reverential Poſture, *John* 17. 1. *Luke* 22. 4. *Matth.* 26. 39. yea when he was to chuſe and ordain ſome of his Diſciples to the Work of the Miniſtry, and to ſucceed him after his departure, under the name of Apoſtles, he ſpent the Night before in Prayer to God, *Luke* 6. 12. I confeſs the words there uſed ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, will ſcarce admit of that Interpretation or Expoſition, ſignifying rather in a ſtrict ſenſe, that he went into a place appointed for Prayer, which was uſually called προσευχὴ, a place of Prayer, which kind of Places were very frequent in *Judæa*, and ſome of them continued 'till *Epiphanius*'s time, as himſelf aſſerts; and they were only plots of Ground encloſed with a Wall, and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always, upon Moun-

Mountains, whither the *Jews* uſed to reſort to pray together in great Multitudes. And this ſeems to be the proper meaning of theſe words, where our Saviour is ſaid to go into a Mountain, and to continue all Night, ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ, *in one of thoſe Proſeucha's of God, a place dedicated to his Service.* Yet howſoever we cannot ſuppoſe but that he went thither to do what the place whither he went was deſigned for, even to pray. And by conſequence, that ſeeing he ſtayed there all Night, queſtionleſs he ſpent the whole Night in Prayer and Meditation, in order to ſo great a Work as the ordaining his Apoſtles was.

Here therefore is another Copy which our Maſter Chriſt hath ſet us to write after, a Leſſon that all muſt learn and practiſe that would be his Diſciples. Though we ordinarily converſe with nothing but Dirt and Clay, and with our fellow Worms on Earth, yet as Chriſt did, ſo ſhould we often retire from the Tumults and Buſtles of the World, to converſe with him that made us; both to praiſe him for the Mercies we have received, and to pray unto him for what we want; only we ſhall do well to have

a care that we do not perform ſo ſolemn a Duty as this is, after a careleſs and perfunctory manner, becauſe none ſees us but God; for his ſeeing us is infinitely more than if all the World beſides ſhould ſee us, and we muſt ſtill remember that Prayer is the greateſt Work that a Creature can be engaged in, and therefore to be performed with the greateſt ſeriouſneſs, reverence, and earneſtneſs that poſſibly we can raiſe up our Spirits to. And beſides our daily Devotions which we owe, and ought to pay to God, whenſoever we ſet upon any great and weighty Buſineſs, we muſt be ſure to follow our Saviour's ſteps, in ſetting ſome time apart, proportionably to the Buſineſs we undertake, wherein to ask God's Counſel, and deſire his Direction and Bleſſing in the moſt ſerious and ſolemn manner that poſſibly we can. I need not tell the Reader what benefit we ſhall receive by this means, none of us that ſhall try it but will ſoon find it by experience.

I ſhall obſerve only one thing more concerning our Saviour's Devotion, and that is, that although he took all Occaſions to inſtruct or admoniſh his Diſciples and Followers, whether in the Fields or upon the Mountains, or in pri-

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vate Houſes, even whereſoever he could find an Opportunity to do it; yet upon the Sabbath-days he always frequented the publick Worſhip of God; he went into the Synagogues, Places appointed for publick Prayers, and reading and hearing of the Word, a thing which I fear many amongſt us do not think of, or at leaſt not rightly conſider it; for if they did, they would not dare methinks, to walk ſo directly contrary to our bleſſed Saviour in this particular; for St. *Luke* tells us, that *when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his cuſtom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day*, Luke 4. 16. From whence none of us but may eaſily obſerve, that our Saviour did not go into a Synagogue, or Church, by the by, to ſee what they were doing there; neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the Sabbath-day, but it was his cuſtom and conſtant practice to do ſo, even to go each Sabbath-day to the publick Ordinance, there to join with the Congregation in performing their publick Service and Devotions to Almighty God.

And

And here I muſt take leave to ſay, that was there no other Law, nor any other Obligations upon us (as there be many) to frequent the publick Worſhip of God, this Practice and Example of our bleſſed Saviour doth ſufficiently and effectually oblige us all, to a conſtant Attendance upon the publick Ordinance. For as we are Chriſtians, and profeſs our ſelves to be his Diſciples, we are all bound to follow him; he commands us here and elſewhere to it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow him in, more than in the Manner of his worſhipping God. And therefore whoſoever out of any Humour, Fancy or Sloathfulneſs, ſhall preſume to neglect the publick Worſhip of God, he doth not only act contrary unto Chriſt's Example, but tranſgreſſes alſo his Command, that enjoins him to follow that Example. What they who are guilty of this will have to anſwer for themſelves, when they come to ſtand before Chriſt's Tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians, ſhould follow Chriſt in all things that they can, and by conſequence in this particular, and that they ſin who do not.

But

But in whatſoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's Steps, that we are uſually preſent at the publick Worſhip of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow him in, but that as we follow him to the publick Ordinances, ſo we do likewiſe in our private Devotions, yea and in our Behaviour both to God and Man. Which that we may the better do, I have endeavoured to ſhew wherein eſpecially we ought to follow Chriſt, in being obedient to our Parents, ſubject to our Governors, lowly to the loweſt, loving and charitable unto all; as alſo, in growing in Wiſdom and the Knowledge of God, in contemning the World, in devoting our ſelves wholly to the Service of God, in reſigning our Wills to his, in loving of him, in truſting on him above all things elſe, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting his publick Ordinances; to which I may alſo add, in denying our ſelves, and taking up our Croſſes, which himſelf hath done before us, as well as required of us.

What now remains, but that ſeeing the Steps wherein our Saviour walked, we ſhould all reſolve to walk together

ther in them. And I hope that I need not uſe Arguments to perſuade any to it; it is enough one would think, that Chriſt himſelf, whoſe name we bear, expects and commands it from us. And in that the ſum of all our Religion conſiſteth in obeying and following Chriſt, the Circumſtances of whoſe Life are recorded on purpoſe that we may imitate him unto the utmoſt of our Power, not only in the Matter but Manner of our Actions, even in the Circumſtances as well as in the Subſtance of them.

But this I dare ſay we all both know and believe, even that it is our Duty to follow Chriſt; and therefore it is a ſad, a diſmal thing to conſider, that amongſt them that know it there are ſo few that do it; But even thoſe that go under the Name of Chriſtians themſelves, do more generally follow the Beaſts of the Field, or the very Fiends of Hell, rather than Chriſt our Saviour. For all covetous Worldlings that look no higher than Earth, and all luxurious Epicures that labour after no other but ſenſual Pleaſures, whom do they imitate but the Beaſts that periſh. And as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malici-

ous,

ous, Seducers of their Brethren, and Oppreſſors of their Neighbours, all Backbiters, and Falſe-accuſers, all Deriders of Religion, and Apoſtates from it, they are all of their Father the Devil, and his Works they do. And if all ſuch Perſons ſhould be taken from amongſt us, how few would be left behind that follow Chriſt? very few indeed! but I hope there would be ſome. And oh that all who read this would be in the Number of them, even that they would all from this Day forward reſolve to come as near our bleſſed Saviour in all their Actions both to God and Man, as poſſibly they can; which if we once did, what holy, what happy Lives ſhould we then lead? how ſhould we antedate both the Work and Joys of Heaven? and how certain ſhould we be to be there ere long, where Chriſt that is the Pattern of our Lives here, will be the Portion of our Souls for ever.

Thus I have ſhewn what Chriſt requires of thoſe who would be his Diſciples, enjoining them to deny themſelves, take up their Croſs, and follow him. And now I have done my Duty in explaining theſe Words, 'tis all my Readers as well as mine to practiſe them, which

which I heartily wiſh we would all reſolve to do; and I muſt ſay, it highly concerns us all to do ſo, for we can never be ſaved but by Chriſt, nor by him unleſs we be his Diſciples; neither can we be his Diſciples, unleſs we do what here is required of us. And therefore if we care not whether we be ſaved or no, we may think no more of theſe things, nor trouble our heads about them; but if we really deſire to come to Heaven, let us remember he who alone can bring us thither, hath told us, that *we muſt deny our ſelves, take up our croſs, and follow him.*

THOUGHTS

UPON

Our Call and Election.

MANY are called, (ſaith our Saviour, *Matt.* 22. 14.) *but few choſen.* Oh dreadful Sentence, who is able to hear it without trembling and aſtoniſhment! If he had ſaid, that of all the Men that are born into the World there are but few ſaved, this would not have ſtruck ſuch a Fear and Horror into us; for we might ſtill hope that though *Turks*, *Jews* and Heathens, which are far the greateſt part of the World, ſhould all periſh, yet we few in compariſon of them, who are baptized into his Name, who profeſs his Go-

ſpel,

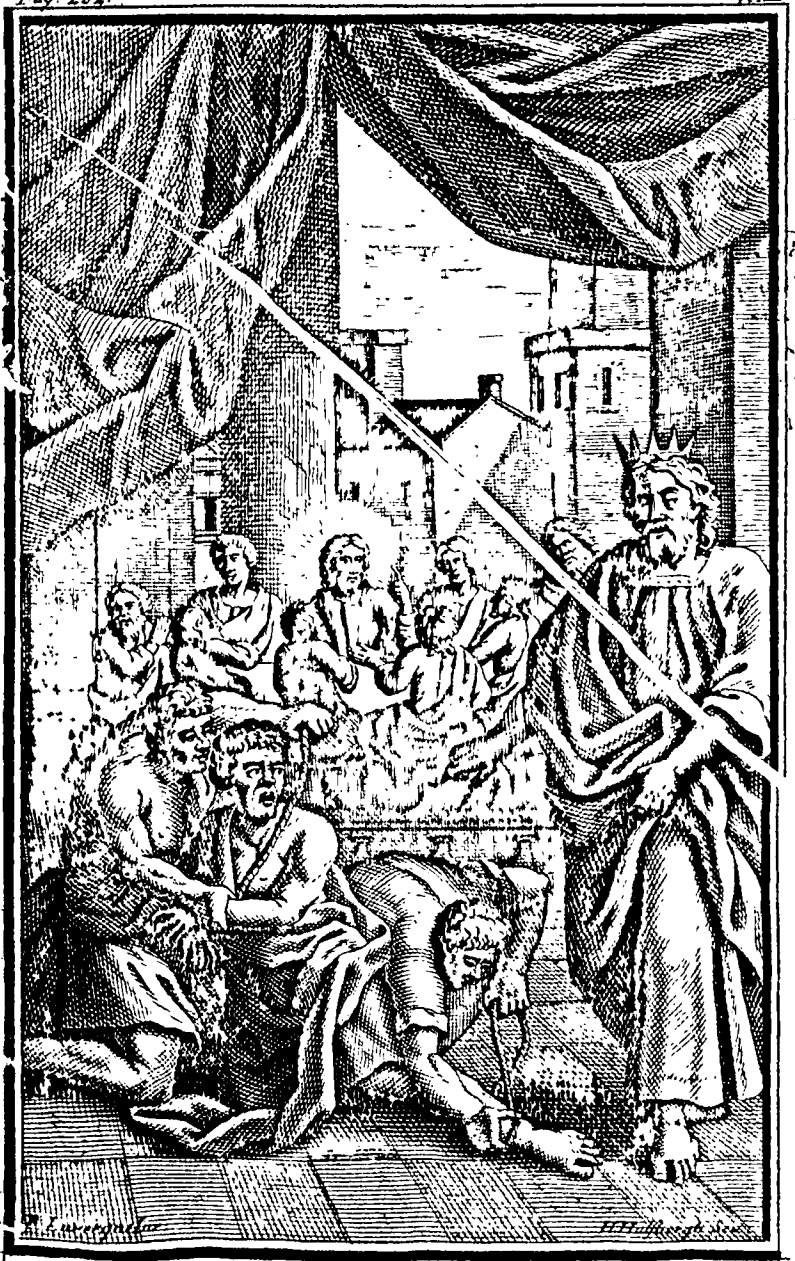
ſpel, who enjoy his Ordinances, who are admitted to his Sacraments, that all we who are called to him, might be choſen and ſaved by him; but that of thoſe very Perſons who are called, there are but few choſen: What a ſharp and terrible Sentence is this! Who can bear it? Eſpecially conſidering by whom it was pronounced, even by Chriſt himſelf. If a mere Man had ſpoken it, we might hope it was but an human Error; if an Angel had uttered it, we might think it poſſible he might be miſtaken; but that Chriſt himſelf, the eternal Son of God, who is Truth and Infallibility it ſelf, that he ſhould aſſert it, that he who laid down his own Life to redeem ours, that he who came into the World on purpoſe to call and ſave us, that he in whom alone it is poſſible for us to be choſen to Salvation, that he ſhould ſay, *Many are called, but few choſen.* This is an hard Saying indeed, which may juſtly make our Ears to tingle, and our Hearts to tremble at the hearing of it. And yet we ſee our Saviour here expreſly ſaith it, and not only here neither, but again, *Matt.* 20. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing he would have us often think of, and a

matter of more than ordinary importance, in that he did not think it enough to tell us of it once, but he repeated it in the ſame Words again, that we might be ſure to remember it, and take eſpecial notice of it, that *many are called, but few choſen.*

In which words, that we may underſtand our Saviour's Meaning aright, we muſt firſt conſider the Occaſion of them in this place, which in brief was this. Our Saviour, according to the cuſtom that obtain'd in thoſe Days amongſt the Wiſe Men of the Eaſt, delighting to uſe Parables, thereby to repreſent his Heavenly Doctrine more clearly to the underſtanding of his Hearers, in this Chapter compares the *Kingdom of God to a certain King that made a marriage for his ſon, and ſent his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding*, ver. 2, 3. Where, by the King, he means the Eternal God, the univerſal Monarch of the World, who intending to make a Marriage betwixt his Son and the Church, ſtyled the Spouſe of Chriſt, he firſt ſent to his Gueſts before bidden, even the *Jews*, the Seed of *Abraham* his Friend, and at that time his peculiar People. But they not hearkening to the firſt Invitation,

tion, he ſends to them again, *ver.* 4. Yet they ſtill made light of it, having it ſeems, as we moſt have, other Buſineſs to mind, and therefore went their way, ſome to their Farms, others to their Merchandize, *ver.* 5. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reaſon why Men accept not of the Overtures of Grace made unto them in the Goſpel, is becauſe their Minds are taken up with the Cares of this World, looking upon their Farms, their Trades and Merchandize, as things of greater moment than Heaven and Eternal Glory. Yea, ſome of them took the Servants which were ſent to invite them, *and treated them ſpightfully, and ſlew them*, ver. 6. Why, what is the matter? what Injury have the Servants, the Prophets, the Apoſtles, or the Miniſters of Chriſt done them? What, do they come to oppreſs them, to take their Eſtates from them? To diſgrace, or bring them into bondage? No, they only come to invite them to a Marriage Feaſt, to tender them the higheſt Comforts and Refreſhments imaginable both for their Souls and Bodies. And is this all the recompence they give them for their kindneſs, not only to refuſe it, but to abuſe them that bring it? Well might this glorious

King be angry and incenſed at ſuch an Affront offered him as this was; and therefore *He ſent forth his armies and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city*, ver. 7. as we all know he did to the murdering *Jews*, who ſoon after this were deſtroyed, and their royal City *Jeruſalem* burnt. But now the Feaſt is prepared, ſhall there be none to eat it? Yes, for ſeeing they who were firſt bidden were not worthy to partake of his Dainties, he orders his Servants *to go into the high ways and bid as many as they could find to the marriage*, ver. 6, 9. The *Jews* having refuſed the Goſpel, God ſends to invite the *Gentiles* to it, who hitherto had been reckoned Aliens to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael, ſtrangers to the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world*, Eph. 2. 12. But now they alſo are bidden to the Wedding, they are called to Chriſt, and invited to partake of all the Privileges of the Goſpel. For the Servants having received the command, *went out into the high way*, even into all the by-places and corners of the World, *and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts*, ver. 10. But amongſt



Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness, &c. For many are call'd, but few are chosen. Math: 22. v: 13. 14 —

mongſt theſe too when the King came to ſee his Gueſts, he ſaw one that had not on a wedding Garment, *ver.* 11. Under which One are repreſented all of the ſame kind, who have not on their wedding Garment, that is, who walk not worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, not being clothed with Humility, Faith, and other Graces ſuitable for a Chriſtian. All which, notwithſtanding they were invited, yea and came in too upon their Invitation, yet they are caſt out again into utter Darkneſs, *Matth.* 22. 12, 13. And then he adds, *for many are called, but few choſen;* as if he ſhould have ſaid, The *Jews* were called but would not come, the *Gentiles* are called they come, but ſome of them are caſt out again; ſo that of the many which are called, there are but few choſen. *For many are called, but few choſen.*

Which ſhort, but pithy Saying, of our bleſſed Saviour, that we may rightly underſtand, we ſhall firſt conſider the former part of it, *Many are called*, and then the latter, *but few choſen.* That we may apprehend the full Meaning of the firſt part of this Propoſition, *Many are called*, there are three things to be conſidered.

1. What is here meant by being called.
2. How Men are called.
3. How it appears that *many are called.*

As for the firſt, what we are here to underſtand by being called. We muſt know that this is meant only of God's Voice to Mankind, making known his Will and Pleaſure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly; and ſo inviting them to his Service here, and to the Enjoyment of his Preſence hereafmter.

But to explain the Nature of it more particularly, we muſt conſider the *terminus a quo*, and the *terminus ad quod*, *what it is God calls us from, and what it is he calls us to*, both which we ſhall ſpeak to, jointly or together.

1. He calls us from Darkneſs to Light, from Error and Ignorance, to Truth and Knowledge: As he made us rational and knowing Creatures at firſt, ſo he would have us to be again, ſo as to underſtand and know him that made us, and that gave us the power of underſtanding and knowing; and not employ the little Knowledge we have only about the affairs of our Bodies, our Trades, and Callings in this World, nor yet in learning

ing Arts and Sciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal Souls, that we may know him that is the true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent; without which, all our other Knowledge will avail us nothing. We are ſtill in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by conſequence uncomfortable as well as dangerous Eſtate, God of his infinite Mercy is pleas'd to call us, that we *ſhould ſhew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

2. God calls us from Superſtition and Idolatry, to ſerve and worſhip him. For we are called to turn *from Idols, to ſerve the living and true God*, 1 Theſſ. 1. 9. Thus he called *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and his Poſterity the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, Places of Idolatry, that they might ſerve and worſhip him, and him alone. Thus he called our Anceſtors of this Nation out of their Heatheniſh Superſtitions, to the Knowledge and Worſhip of himſelf, and of his Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. And thus he called upon us to *flee from Idolatry*, 1 Cor. 10. 14. not only from Heatheniſh or Popiſh, but from all Idolatry whatſoever, and by con-

conſequence from Covetouſneſs, which God himſelf tells us in plain Terms is Idolatry, *Col.* 3. 5. And ſo indeed is our allowing our ſelves in any known Sin whatſoever; for we idolize it by ſetting it up in our Hearts and Affections, inſtead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and ſerve it, though not in our Bodies yet in our Souls, which is the higheſt kind of Idolatry, which God calls us from.

3. Hence he alſo calls us from all manner of Sin and Prophaneſs, to Holineſs and Piety, both in our Affections and Actions. For as the Apoſtle ſaith, *God hath not called us to uncleanneaſs but to holineſs*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 7. Where by Uncleanneſs he means all manner of Luſts and Corruptions which defile the Soul, and make it unclean and impure in the ſight of God. Theſe God doth not call us to, but from: It is Holineſs and univerſal Righteouſneſs that he calls us to, and commands us to follow: This is the great thing that Chriſt in his Goſpel calls for, *For the Grace of God* which is in his Goſpel, *hath now appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. He *now commandeth all men*

men every where to repent, and turn to God, *Acts* 17. 30. Hence he is ſaid to have *called us with an holy calling*, 2 Tim. 1. 9. And as he who hath called us is holy, ſo ought we to be *holy in all manner of Converſation*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. Thus therefore we all are called to be an holy People, a People zealous of good Works, a People devoted wholly to the Service of the living God. In brief, we are called to be Saints, a People conſecrated unto God; and therefore, as every Veſſel in the Temple was holy, ſo we being called to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, every thing in us ſhould be holy; our Thoughts ſhould be holy, our Affections holy, our Words holy, our Deſires holy, every Faculty of our Souls, every Member of our Bodies, and every Action of our Lives ſhould be holy, every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us ſhould be holy, and all becauſe our Calling is holy; and we ought to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*, Eph. 4. 1.

4. God calls us from carnal and temporal things, to mind Heaven and eternal Glory. He ſees and obſerves how eager we are in proſecuting of this World's Vani-

Vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon ſuch tranſitory and unſatisfying Trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlaſting Peace; not to be conformed to this World, but tranſformed by the renewing of our Minds, that we *may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. To ſet our *Affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon earth*, Col. 3. 2. To *ſeek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs* in the firſt Place, *Matth.* 6. 33. Hence it is ſtiled *an heavenly calling*, Heb. 3. 1. and *an high calling*, Phil. 3. 14. becauſe we are called by it to look after high and heavenly things. He that made us hath ſo much Kindneſs for us, that it pities him to ſee us moil and toil, and ſpend our Strength and Labour, about ſuch low and pitiful, ſuch impertinent and unneceſſary things, which himſelf knows can never ſatisfie us, and therefore he calls and invites us to himſelf, and to the Enjoyment of his own Perfections, which are able to fill and ſatiate our immortal Souls.

5. Hence laſtly, we are called from Miſery and Danger, to the ſtate of Happineſs and Felicity. As he called *Lot* ou

out of *Sodom*, when Fire and Brimſtone was ready to fall upon it, ſo he calls us from the World and Sin, becauſe otherwiſe Wrath and Fury will fall upon our Heads. Or as he called *Noah* into the Ark, to preſerve him from the overflowing Flood, ſo he calls us into his Service, and to the Faith of his Son, that ſo we may eſcape that flood of Miſery which will ſuddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving World. And therefore we muſt not think that he calls and invites us to him, becauſe he ſtands in need of us, or wants our Service; no, it is not becauſe he cannot be happy without us, but becauſe we cannot be happy without him, nor in him neither, unleſs we come unto him. This is the only reaſon why he calls us ſo earneſtly to him, *For as I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael!* Ezek. 33. 11. Let us not ſtand therefore pauſing upon it, and conſidering whether we ſhall hearken to God's Call or no, nor ſay ſeverally within our ſelves, How ſhall I part with my Profits? How ſhall I deny my ſelf the Enjoyment of my ſenſual Pleaſures?

How

How ſhall I forſake my darling and beloved Sins? But rather ſay, how ſhall I abide the Judgment of the great God; How ſhall I eſcape if I neglect ſo great Salvation as I am now called and invited to? For we may aſſure our ſelves, this is the great and only End why God calls ſo pathetically upon us to come unto him, that ſo we may be delivered from his Wrath, and enjoy his Love and Favour for ever.

Thus we ſee what it is that God calls Mankind both from and to; he calls them from Darkneſs to Light, from Idolatry to true Religion, from Sin to Holineſs, from Earth to Heaven, and from the deepeſt Miſery to the higheſt Happineſs that they are capable of. The next thing to be conſidered is, how God is pleaſed to call us; for which we muſt know that,

1. He hath vouchſafed to call ſome with his own Mouth, as I may ſo ſpeak, even by immediate Revelations from himſelf. Thus he called *Abraham* and *Moſes*, and ſeveral of the Patriarchs of the Old Teſtament. And thus he called *Paul*, Chriſt himſelf calling from Heaven to him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Acts 9. 4. And it is obſervable, that

that whoſoever were thus called, they always obeyed: But this is not the Calling here ſpoken of.

2. God calls all Mankind by his Works and Providences. All the Creatures in the World are as ſo many Tongues declaring the Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, and Glory of God unto us, and ſo call upon us to praiſe, honour, and obey him. And all his Providences have their ſeveral and diſtinct Voices; his Mercies beſpeak our Affections, and his Judgments our Fear. *Hear ye*, ſaith he, *the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Mich. 6. 9. The Rod, it ſeems, hath a Voice, which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea all the World be called this way, yet neither is this the Calling our Saviour means, when he ſaith, *many are called, but few choſen.*

3. *Laſtly*, Therefore God hath called many by the Miniſtry of his Word, and of his Servants the Prophets, the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors declaring it, and explaining it to them. Thus God ſpake to our Fathers by the Prophets, riſing up early and ſending them to call Sinners to Repentance, by ſhewing them their Sins, and the dangerous conſequents of them. As when he ſent his Prophet

Iſaiah,

Iſaiah, he bids him *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy Voice as a Trumpet, and ſhew my People their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins*, Iſaiah 58. 1. And they being convinced of, and humbled for their Sins, then he ſent his Prophets to invite them to accept of Grace and Pardon from him, ſaying in the Language of the ſame Prophet, *Ho! every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no mony, come ye, buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without mony and without price*, Iſa 55. 1, 2, 3. And God having thus *at ſundry times, and in divers manners ſpoken in time-paſt unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds*, Heb. 1. 1, 2. who therefore ſaid with his own Mouth, that he *came not call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*, Matth. 9. 13. Hence as ſoon as ever he entered upon his Miniſtry, he called to Mankind, ſaying *Repent, and believe the Goſpel*, Mark 1. 15. and *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden*, Matth. 11. 28. And when he was to depart hence he left order with his Apoſtles, to go and

call

call all Nations, and teach them what he had commanded, promiſing that himſelf would be with them *to the end of the World*, Matth. 28. 19, 20. By vertue therefore of this Commiſſion, not only the Apoſtles themſelves, but all ſucceeding Miniſters in all Ages to the end of the World, are ſent to call Mankind to embrace the Goſpel, and to accept of the Terms propounded in it. So that when we his Miniſters preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they muſt not think we come in our own Name; for as the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us; we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. Hence in Scripture we are called alſo κήρυκες *Heralds*, and our Office is κηρύσσειν *to proclaim as Heralds*, the Will and Pleaſure of Almighty God unto Mankind, to offer Peace and Pardon to all that have rebelled againſt our Lord and Maſter the King of Heaven, if they will now come in, and ſubmit themſelves unto him; if not, in a moſt ſolemn and dreadful manner, to denounce his Wrath and heavy Diſpleaſure againſt them. So that as the Angel was ſent to call *Lot* out

of *Sodom*, when the Lord was going to rain Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven upon it: ſo God being ready every Moment to ſhower down his Fury and Vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving World, he ſends us to call Men out of it, *to open their Eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts 26. 18. and to invite them to his Court, to live with him and be happy for ever.

And that this is the proper meaning of our bleſſed Saviour, in this Place, where he ſaith, *many are called*, is plain from the Parable whereon theſe Words are grounded; where the King is ſaid to have ſent his Servants to call the Gueſts which were bidden to the Marriage Feaſt, and put Words into their Mouths, telling them what to ſay, *ver.* 4. as he hath given us alſo Inſtructions how to call and invite Mankind in his holy Word. And when of the many which were called, there would but few come; hence our Saviour uttered this Expreſſion, that *many are called, but few choſen.* From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not ſuch as were called immediately from God himſelf, for they were but few; nor yet ſuch as are called

by

by the works of Creation and Providence, for ſo not many only, but all are called; but he means ſuch as are called by his Word, and by his Servants and Miniſters reading, preaching, and explaining of it.

And verily that many have been and ſtill are called in this ſenſe, which is the next thing I promiſed to ſhew, I need not ſtand long to prove. For our Saviour having commanded his Apoſtles to go and call all Nations to his Faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, *Mat.* 28. 19. it cannot be denied but that the Apoſtles preſently diſperſed themſelves, and preached the Goſpel to all Nations; which they did ſo effectually, that in few Years after, even in St. *Paul*'s time, *The Myſtery of the Goſpel was made known to all nations for the obedience of Faith*, Rom. 16. 26. and in St. *John*'s time, *ſome were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, Rev. 7. 9. Yea, ſo mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the ancients compared it to Lightning, that immediately diſperſed it ſelf, and was ſeen all the World over. So that in leſs than two hundred Years, *ab ortu ſolis ad occaſum lex Chriſtiana ſuſ-*

cepta eſt, The Chriſtian Religion was received all the world over, from Eaſt to Weſt, as *Lactantius* who then lived aſſerts. From which time therefore, how many thouſands of millions of Souls have been called to the Faith of Chriſt, by the preaching of his Goſpel. And not to ſpeak of other Nations, how ſoon did the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe upon theſe Weſtern parts of the World, and particularly upon this Nation, wherein we dwell; ſeveral of Chriſt's own Diſciples and Apoſtles, as *Simon Peter, Simon Zelotes, James* the Son of *Zebedee, Joſeph* of *Arimathea, Ariſtobulus,* and St. *Paul* himſelf, being all recorded by Eccleſiaſtical Writers, to have preached the Goſpel to this Nation. Be ſure in leſs than two hundred Years the Chriſtian Faith was here received, *Tertullian* himſelf ſaying expreſly, *Britannorum inacceſſa Romanis loca, Chriſto ſubdita, The* Romans *could ſcarcely come at* Britany, *but Chriſt hath conquered it.* And ſoon after him, *Arnobius* ſaith that the Goſpel, *Nec ipſos Indos latuit à parte orientis, nec ipſos Britannos à parte occidentis, Was not conceal'd either from the* Indians *in the Eaſtern part of the World, nor from the* Britons *themſelves in the Weſt.*

And

And ſince the Goſpel was firſt here planted, how many have been called by it to the Faith of Chriſt? Yea through the Mercy of the moſt high God, how many at this moment are called all the Nation over? And to come ſtill cloſer to our ſelves, all that read this have I doubt not been often called heretofore, and now are called again. For in the Name of the moſt high God, and of his Son Chriſt, *I pray and beſeech you all as ſtrangers and pilgrims, to abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the Soul*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. to repent of your Sins, and believe the Goſpel. I call and invite you alſo to accept the offers of Grace and Pardon which are made you in Jeſus Chriſt, to ſit down with him at his own Table, and feed by Faith upon his Body and Blood, that ſo you may partake of the Merits of his Death and Paſſion, and ſo live with him for evermore. Thus you are all called, but I fear there are but few choſen.

Having thus explained and proved the firſt part of this Propoſition, that *many are called*, we muſt now conſider the meaning, truth and reaſons of the other part of it, *but few are choſen.* Πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσι κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ. *For many are called, but few choſen*; that is, there

are but few which are ſo approved of by God, as to be elected and choſen from the other part of the World, to inherit eternal Life. That this is the main drift and ſcope of our bleſſed Saviour in theſe words, is plain from the forgoing Parable, which gave him occaſion to pronounce them. For there all that were firſt called refuſed to come to the Marriage Feaſt which they were invited to, and of them which came ſome had not on their wedding Garment; that is, although they came in to the outward Profeſſion of the Goſpel, yet did not walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewiſe were excluded; upon which our Saviour adds theſe words, *For many are called, but few choſen.* From whence it is eaſie to obſerve his Meaning in general to be only this, that although many were called to partake of the Privileges and Graces of his Goſpel, yet ſeeing of thoſe who were called, many would not come at all, and of thoſe who come, many do not come ſo as the Goſpel requires of them, with their wedding Garment on; hence of the many who are called, there are but few choſen to partake of the Marriage Feaſt, that is, of the glorious Promiſes made in

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the Goſpel, to thoſe that come aright unto it. Few, not abſolutely in themſelves conſidered, but few comparatively in reſpect of the many which are not choſen; or rather few in compariſon of the many which are called. For if we conſider them abſolutely in themſelves, they are certainly very many; our Saviour himſelf ſaith, *Many ſhall come from the Eaſt and Weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham*, &c. Mat. 8. 11. And in the *Revelations* you read of many thouſands that were ſealed of every Tribe. Yea, *There was a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, ſtood before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white, and palms in their hands*, Rev. 7. 9. Inſomuch that for all the numberleſs number of fallen or apoſtatized Angels, St. *Auſtin* was of Opinion, that there will be as many Men ſaved, as there are Angels damned, or rather more. For, ſaith he, upon the fall of the Angels and Men, he determined to gather together by his infinite Grace, ſo many out of the mortal Progeny, *ut inde ſuppleat & inſtauret partem quæ lapſa eſt Angelorum, That he might from thence make up and reſtore that part of Angels which was fallen; ac*

ſic illa dilecta & ſuperna Civitas non fraudetur ſuorum numero civium, quin-etiam fortaſſis & uberiore lætetur. And ſo that beloved City which is above, may not be deprived of the number of its Citizens, but perhaps rejoyce in having more. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 22. c. 1. which Notion he grounds upon thoſe words of our Saviour in this Chapter, *For in the reſurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are* ἰσάγγελοι, *as the Angels of God in heaven*, Mat. 22. 30. Or as the words may be interpreted, they are equal to the Angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect Angels, as that learned and pious Father expounds it. But howſoever that be, this is certain, that the number of Men choſen and ſaved, will be very great, conſidered abſolutely in themſelves; and yet notwithſtanding, if they be compared with the many more which are called, they are but very few. Chriſt's Flock is, as himſelf ſtiles it, μικρὸν ποίμνιον, a very little, little Flock, *Luke* 12. 32. that is, in compariſon of the vaſt multitudes of Souls that flock after the World and Sin. As in a Garden there are but few choice Flowers in compariſon of the Weeds that grow in it; there

there are but very few Diamonds and precious Stones, in compariſon of Pebbles and Gravel upon the Sea-ſhore; in the richeſt Mines there is far more droſs than Gold and Silver: So is it in the Church of Chriſt; there is but little Wheat, in compariſon of the Tares that come up with it; Chriſt hath a great many hangers on, but few faithful and obedient Servants; there are many that ſpeak him very fair, and make a plauſible profeſſion of the Faith and Religion which he taught, but where ſhall we find one that practiſeth it? If there be here one and there another, two or three in a Pariſh, or perhaps in a whole City, what is this to the innumerable Company of ſuch as are called by him, and baptized into his Name, and yet leave him to follow after the World and Vanity: Oh what juſt ground had our Saviour to ſay, *Many are called, but few choſen?*

But to demonſtrate the truth of this Propoſition ſtill more fully, and as clearly as poſſibly I can, I muſt firſt lay down one Principle as a *Poſtulatum*, which I ſuppoſe all will acknowledge to be true, and that is this, That whatſoever Profeſſion a Man makes of the Chriſtian Religion, it will avail him nothing without the

the Practice of it; or if you will take it in our Saviour's own words, *Not every one*, ſaith he, *that ſaith unto me, Lord Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 7. 21. Or as the Apoſtle expreſſeth it, *For not the hearers of the law are juſt before God, but the doers of the law ſhall be juſtified*, Rom. 2. 13. That is, it is not our hearing and knowing our Duty that will ſtand us in any ſtead before God, but our doing of it; it is not our believing that we may be ſaved by believing in Chriſt, whereby we can be ſaved, without actual believing in him, without ſuch a Faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and ſalvation of our immortal Souls, and conſequently for the aſſiſtance of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey his Goſpel, and to perform all ſuch things as himſelf hath told us are neceſſary in order to our everlaſting Happineſs: And whatſoever Faith we pretend to, unleſs it comes to this, that it put us upon univerſal Obedience to all the Commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good, for it is not ſuch a Faith as Chriſt requires, which always works by Love, conquers the World,

World, ſubdues Sin, purifies the Heart, and ſanctifies the whole Soul whereſoever it comes. It is ſuch a Faith as this which is the wedding Garment, without which no Man is choſen nor admitted to partake of thoſe celeſtial Banquets, which Chriſt our Saviour hath provided for us. And therefore no Man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himſelf to be elected or choſen to eternal Salvation, that is not holy in all manner of Converſation; God himſelf having told us expreſly, *that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. So that having God's own word for it, we may poſitively and confidently aſſert, that no Man in the World can upon juſt grounds be reputed as choſen by God, that doth not in all things to the utmoſt of his power, conform himſelf, and adjuſt his Actions to the Laws and Commands of God. So that how many ſoever are called, how many ſoever come in to the outward Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, yet none of them can be ſaid to be choſen, but ſuch as are real and true Saints. And how few thoſe are, is a matter which we have more cauſe to bewail than to prove. Howſoever, that we may ſee that we have but too much reaſon to believe this Aſſertion

of

of our bleſſed Saviour, that *many are called, but few choſen*, I deſire we may but conſider the eſtate of Chriſtendom in general, and weigh the Lives and Actions of all ſuch as profeſs to believe in Chriſt, view them well, and examine them by the Goſpel Rules, and then we ſhall ſoon conclude that there are but few choſen; or to bring it home more cloſely to our ſelves, who are all called, and take out from amongſt us all ſuch Perſons as come not up to the terms of the Goſpel, and we ſhall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed who can be diſcerned and judged by the light either of Reaſon or Scripture to be choſen by God to eternal Life. For take out from amongſt us,

1. All atheiſtical Perſons, who though they are baptized into the name of Chriſt, and ſo are called to the Faith of Chriſt, yet neither believe in Chriſt nor God, ſuch Fools as ſay in their Heart *there is no God*, Pſal. 14. 1. For all will grant, that they are not choſen by God who do not ſo much as believe that there is any God to chuſe them. Neither can it be imagined that the allwiſe God ſhould chuſe ſuch Fools as theſe to be with him, who will not ſo much as acknowledge

knowledge him to be. And yet how many ſuch Fools have we amongſt us, whoſe Practices have ſo depraved their Principles, that they will not believe there is any God, becauſe they wiſh there was none? And when theſe are taken from amongſt the called, I fear the Number of the Choſen amongſt them will be much leſſened.

2. Take out from amongſt us all ignorant Perſons, that underſtand not the common Principles of Religion, nor the Fundamental Articles of that Faith which they are called to: For that theſe are not choſen, is plain, in that though they be called by Chriſt, yet they know not what he would have them do, nor yet who it is that calls them. And therefore as God would have all Men to be ſaved, ſo for that End he would have them come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1. *Tim.* 2. 4. that is, he would have them know all ſuch Truths as himſelf hath revealed to them in his Goſpel, as neceſſary to be known in order to their eternal Salvation, without which Knowledge it is impoſſible for a Man to perform what is required of him; for though a Man may know his Duty and not do it, no Man can do his Duty unleſs

leſs he firſt know it. And therefore groſs Ignorance and ſaving Faith, cannot poſſibly conſiſt or ſtand together; for ſaving Faith is always joined with, or puts a Man upon ſincere Obedience to all the Commands of God. But how can any Man obey the Commands of God, who neither knows that God whoſe Commands they are, nor yet what theſe Commands are which God would have him to obey? No certainly, a blind Man may as well follow his temporal Calling, how intricate ſoever it be, as he that is groſly ignorant, the high Calling of a Chriſtian; for he is altogether uncapable of it, and ſo not only unworthy, but unfit to be choſen to it. Hence God himſelf hath told us, that he is ſo far from chuſing ſuch as live and die in this manner without underſtanding, that he will never ſhew them any Mercy or Favour. *For it is a people*, ſaith he, *of no underſtanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour*, Iſa. 27. 11. Neither doth he ever blame Mankind for any thing in the World more than for not knowing, and therefore not conſidering him that made and feeds them,

them, *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3. *Hoſ.* 4. 1. And that we may be ſtill farther aſſured that he chuſeth no ſuch Perſons to dwell with him, as do not know him and his Commands, he hath given it us under his hand, that he rejects them, ſaying *My people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge: becauſe thou haſt rejected knowledge, I will alſo reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no prieſt to me; ſeeing thou haſt forgotten the law of thy God, I will alſo forget thy children*, Hoſ. 4. 6.

That therefore no Perſons that are groſly ignorant, and live and die in that Condition, are choſen to eternal Salvation, I ſuppoſe, the Premiſes conſidered, all will acknowledge. But alas! how many ſuch perſons are there in the World, how many amongſt our ſelves? How many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any Worldly Buſineſs, but are mere Novices or rather Ideots in matters of true Religion? Or as the Prophet words it, *Who are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge*, Jer. 4. 22. How many ſuch ignorant and ſottiſh People are there in every corner of the Land? and in this City it ſelf! where they do, or may hear the Word of God read and expounded

pounded to them every Day, and yet ask them ſeriouſly of the Grounds of the Chriſtian Religion, and the Reaſon of the Hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a ſatisfactory or rational Anſwer, than if they had never heard of any ſuch Book as the Bible in the World, or had been born and bred in the remoteſt Corners of *America*, where the ſound of the Goſpel never yet came. But all ſuch, how many ſoever they be, though they be called, they muſt ſtand aloof off, for ſo long as they are ſuch we may be confident they are not choſen. Inſomuch that ſhould we take away no other from the Number of the called, but only ſuch as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called, there are but few choſen.

3. Take out from amongſt us all vicious, profane, debauched and impenitent Perſons, all that make a mock of Sin, and that jear at Holineſs, that live as without God in the World, as if they had neither God to ſerve nor Souls to ſave; as if there was neither a Hell to avoid nor a Heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their Buſineſs to gratifie

their

their Fleſh, and to indulge their Appetite with carnal and ſenſual Pleaſures, looking no higher than to be Fellow-ſharers with the Brutes that periſh; ſuch as in their bewitching Cups ſtick not to fly in the Face of Heaven it ſelf, and dare challenge God himſelf to damn them; that make lying their uſual Dialect, and ſwearing their pleaſing Rhetorick; and are ſo far from being troubled for theſe their Sins, that they take pleaſure and delight in them; ſo far from being aſhamed of them, that they make them their Pride and Glory, and ſo make it their Pleaſure to diſpleaſe God, and their higheſt Honour to diſhonour him that is Honour and Perfection it ſelf. For that no ſuch Perſons as theſe who live and die in ſuch notorious Crimes upon Earth, are choſen to live with God in Heaven, none can deny that believes the Scriptures to be true, which in plain Terms aſſure us of the contrary. *Know ye not*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abuſers of themſelves with mankind; nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revi-*

lers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. And St. *John* tells us, that only they who do the Commandments enter into the City of Heaven: but *without are dogs, and ſorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie*, Rev. 22, 14, 15. So that all ſuch Perſons without timely Repentance, are moſt certainly excluded from the number of the Choſen. And how many are there amongſt us, who allow themſelves in ſome ſuch Sin or other; or rather where ſhall we find a Man that doth not? But to all Perſons that continue in ſuch Sins, I may ſay, ſtand you by, you have no ground as yet to think that you are choſen, but have rather all the Reaſon in the World to believe, that if you go on in ſuch a ſinful Courſe, you will never know what Heaven or Happineſs is. But when all ſuch are taken out of the Number of the called, what a pitious ſcouting will be left behind! In plain terms, we have juſt Cauſe to fear that ignorant and diſſolute Perſons make the greateſt part of thoſe who are called Chriſtians.

4. Take out from amongſt us all hypocritial and falſe hearted Perſons, that ſeem

ſeem indeed to be honeſt and good Men, but ſtill retain ſome ſecret Sin or other which will as certainly keep them out of Heaven as the moſt notorious or ſcandalous Crime that is: ſuch as our Saviour compares to whited Sepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, *but are within full of dead Mens bones, and of all uncleanneſs*, Mat 23. 27. Such whoſe outward Converſation is altogether unblameable; ſo that no Man can charge them with Theft, Perjury, Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, and the like; but in the mean while, they are malicious, uncharitable, cenſorious, proud, ſelf-conceited, diſobedient to Parents or Magiſtrates, covetous, ambitious and the like. And ſo though they be free from thoſe Sins which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad Sins, which the others may be freed from. To which alſo may be added all ſuch as make indeed a greater ſhew of Piety, and ſeem mighty zealous for the little Circumſtances of Religion, but neglect the weightier Matters of the Law, the Love of God, Mercy, Juſtice, and the like. But for all the vain Hopes and high Conceits that ſuch Perſons may have of themſelves, they are far from being ſuch as

the Goſpel requires them, and by conſequence from the Number of the Choſen here ſpoken of. For the *Phariſees* were ſuch Perſons as theſe, and yet our Saviour himſelf tells us, *That except* our *righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees*, we *ſhall in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of* God, Matth. 6. 20. And when he tells us elſewhere, *That except* we *repent* we *muſt all likewiſe periſh*, Luke 13. 3. his meaning is, not that we muſt repent of ſome, or many, or moſt, but of all our Sins, and ſo repent of them as to turn from them; and ſo turn from all Sin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of Converſation, otherwiſe our Saviour himſelf aſſures us, that he will never ſave us, but we muſt periſh without Remedy.

Let any Man conſider this, and then tell me what he thinks of the Number of the choſen, whether it be not very ſmall indeed, in compariſon of the many which are called. For not to ſpeak of other Parts of Chriſtendom, all the People of this Nation are called to the Faith of Chriſt; and how many they are I cannot ſay we all know, for it is paſt any Man's Knowledge. But where is the Man amongſt us all, that doth not harbour

ſome

ſome ſecret Luſt or other in his Boſom; yea, of the many Men in this Nation, where is he that can ſay with *David*, *I have kept my ſelf from mine Iniquity?* Or to uſe the Words of the Prophet, *Run ye to and fro through the ſtreets of this city, and ſee now and know, and ſeek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that ſeeketh the truth, that ſerveth the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind.* I do not deny but there are a great many Profeſſors of Religion amongſt us, who would fain be accounted more ſtrict and holy than their Neighbours, ſo as to be reckoned the Religious; as the Friers and Nuns are in the Church of *Rome:* But are they therefore to be eſteemed the Elect and Choſen of God, becauſe they fancy themſelves to be ſo? or rather is not their Pride and Self-conceitedneſs an Argument, that they are not ſo? Bleſſed be God for it, I have no Spleen nor Rancour againſt any of them, but heartily wiſh they were as truly good and holy as they would ſeem to be. But what? Is not Pride a Sin? Is not Self-conceitedneſs a Sin? Is not Irreverence in God's Worſhip a Sin? Is not Diſobedience to Magiſtrates a Sin? Is not Uncharitableneſs or Cenſoriouſ-

neſs a Sin? Certainly all theſe will be found to be Sins another Day. And therefore whatſoever Pretences Men make unto Religion, if they allow themſelves in ſuch Sins as theſe, they are as far from being in the number of the Choſen, as the moſt diſſolute and ſcandalous Perſons in the World. But when theſe too are removed from the Number of the Called, how few of them will appear to be choſen.

5. Yet once again. Take out all ſuch as believe not in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but being morally honeſt and faithful in performing their Duty to God and Man, truſt more in their own good Works than to his Merit and Mediation. For that all ſuch are to be excluded, is plain from the whole tenour of the Goſpel, which aſſures us, that there is no Salvation to be had but only by Jeſus Chriſt; nor by him neither, but only by believing in him. But if Chriſt ſhould come this Day to Judgment, would he find Faith upon Earth? Verily, I fear, he would find but very little, if any at all amongſt us: He might, I believe, find ſome pretty ſtrict and circumſpect in obeying of his other Laws, or at leaſt endeavouring to do ſo. But for a Man to do all that is required of him, and yet to count himſelf

ſelf an unprofitable Servant; for a Man to do all he can and yet reſt upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jeſus Chriſt for Life and Happineſs, this is hard indeed to Fleſh and Blood, and as rare to find as it is to find a Roſe amongſt the Weeds and Thiſtles of a barren Wilderneſs, or a Diamond amongſt the Gravel upon the Sea-ſhoar; here and there I believe there may be found one, but ſo rarely, that they can ſcarce be termed any, beſure but very few in Compariſon of the many which are called.

Now let us put theſe things together and we ſhall eaſily grant that this ſaying of our Saviour was but too true, *that many are called but few choſen*. And to bring it cloſer to our ſelves, we are all called to repent and believe the Goſpel: Now take out from amongſt us all ignorant Perſons, that have heard indeed, but underſtand not what they hear; all atheiſtical Perſons that believe not really that there is a God to judge them; all debauched Sinners that live in open and notorious Crimes; all phariſaical Hypocrites that avoid open, but indulge themſelves in ſecret Sins, that have *the form, but not the power of godlineſs*; and all ſuch who are as St. *Paul* was before his Converſion,

as touching the Righteouſneſs of the Law blameleſs, but yet believe not in Jeſus Chriſt. Take out, I ſay, all ſuch Perſons as I have named from amongſt us, and what a ſmall number proportionably ſhould we have left behind? How many would be excluded the Preſence of God, how few would continue in it! What cauſe ſhould we then have to ſay with our Saviour, *that many are called but few choſen.*

Having thus explained the Meaning, and confirmed the Truth of this Propoſition, that many are called but few choſen, we muſt conſider the Reaſons of it, how it comes to paſs that of the many which are called there are but few choſen? A thing which I confeſs we have all juſt cauſe to wonder and admire at; Are not Men all rational Creatures? Are they not able to diſtinguiſh betwixt good and evil? Do not they underſtand their own Intereſt? What then ſhould be the reaſon that ſo many of them ſhould be called and invited to the chiefeſt Good, the higheſt Happineſs their Natures are capable of, yet ſo few of them ſhould mind or proſecute it, ſo as to be choſen or admitted into the Participation of it? What ſhall we aſcribe it to, the will and

pleaſure

pleaſure of Almighty God, as if he delighted in the ruin of his Creatures, and therefore although he calls them, he would not have them come unto him? No, that cannot be; for in his revealed Will, which is the only Rule that we are to walk by, he hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it too with an Oath; ſaying, *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that he ſhould turn from his way and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. And elſewhere he aſſures us, that he would *have all Men to be ſaved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. And therefore if we believe what God ſaith, nay if we believe what he hath ſworn, we muſt needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleaſure, that as many as are called, ſhould be all choſen, and ſaved. And indeed if he had no mind we ſhould come when we are called to him, why ſhould he call us all to come? Why hath he given us his Word, his Miniſters, his Ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all he was reſolved not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us, that we ſhould have ſuch hard and unworthy thoughts

thoughts of the great Creator and Governor of the World; eſpecially conſidering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was poſſible for him to expreſs his Mind unto us. I do not deny, but that according to the Apoſtle, *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts 15. 18. And that there are ſeveral paſſages in Scripture which intimate unto us God's eternal Election of all that are truly pious, to live with him for ever. But it is not for us to be ſo bold and impudent, as to pry into the Secrets of God, nor ſo curious as to ſearch into his eternal and incomprehenſible Decrees; but we muſt ſtill remember the Words of *Moſes*, *That ſecret things belong unto the Lord our God, but theſe things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of his law*, Deut. 29. 29. Whatſoever is neceſſary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal Salvation, is clearly revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any farther than to his revealed Will. But God in the Scriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elſewhere, that he is not willing that any

ſhould

ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. This is the revealed Will of God, which we are to acquieſce in, and reſt fully ſatisfied with, ſo as to act accordingly; without concerning our ſelves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not in his ſecret, but revealed Will, that we are to ſearch for the reaſons of this Propoſition, that *many are called, but few choſen.*

Now in conſulting the word of God, to find out the Reaſons of this ſo ſtrange Aſſertion, that *many are called, but few choſen*, I know no better or fitter place to ſearch for them, than this Parable, which gave our bleſſed Saviour the occaſion of aſſerting it; in which it is very obſervable, that he meddles not at all with any Reaſons *a priori*, deduced from the eternal Decrees of his Father, but he only ſuggeſts to us the Reaſons *a poſteriori*, drawn from the diſpoſition and carriage of Men, why ſo many of them are called, and yet ſo few choſen.

For the opening whereof we muſt know, that the end and intent of this Parable, was only to ſhew the entertainment which his Goſpel had then, and ſhould ſtill meet with in the World; many refuſing

refuſing to embrace it at all, and of thoſe who embrace it, many ſtill walking unworthy of it. So that the Iſſue and Conſequence of it will be, that though many be called to it, there are but few choſen. And he hath ſo worded the Parable, that we need not ſeek any farther for the reaſons of this his Concluſion from it, they being almoſt clearly couched in the Parable it ſelf; which that we may the better underſtand, I ſhall open and explain them particularly, ſo as to make them intellible, I hope, to the meaneſt Capacity.

The firſt Reaſon therefore why ſo many are called, but ſo few choſen, is becauſe they who are called to Chriſt, will not come unto him; for this is the firſt Reaſon which our Saviour himſelf in the Parable aſſigns for it; *The King*, ſaith he, *ſent his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, and they would not come*, Mat. 23. 3. *And they would not come*, ſo that the great fault is ſtill in the Wills of Men, which are generally ſo depraved and corrupt, that though they be called never ſo oft, and cannot but in reaſon acknowledge that it is their Intereſt to come, yet they have ſo ſtrange an averſe-

averſeneſs to the Holineſs and Purity of the Goſpel which they are called to, that they will not come unto it only becauſe they will not; for here, they who were firſt bidden, give no reaſon of their refuſal, only it is ſaid, they would not come. And good cauſe why, for when we have ſearched into all the Reaſons imaginable, why Men do not fully ſubmit themſelves to the Obedience of the Goſpel, they will all reſolve and empty themſelves into this, that they will not becauſe they will not. Let Miniſters ſay what they can, let the Scripture ſay what it will, let God himſelf ſay what he pleaſes, yet Sinners Men are, and Sinners they will be, in ſpite of them all, as the Prophet rebuking the People for their Sins, ſaid, *But thou ſaidſt, there is no hope; No, for I have loved ſtrangers, and after them will I go*, Jer. 2. 25. And ſo it is to this day, we tell them of their Sins, and the dangerous Conſequences of them; we tell them that they muſt not love the World, but ſeek the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs in the firſt place; we tell them from Chriſt's own Mouth, that except they repent and forſake their Sins, they muſt periſh; but they ſay in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for

for they have loved the World, and after it they will go, they have found Pleaſure in the commiſſion of their Sins, and therefore they will commit them; Chriſt calls them to come unto him, and they know no reaſon why they ſhould not, but howſoever they will not come. If we were but once willing, the Work was done; for what our Wills are really inclined to, we cannot but uſe the utmoſt of our Endeavour to attain. But the Miſchief is, Men read the Goſpel, they hear Chriſt calling upon them to believe and obey it, but their Wills are ſtill averſe from it, there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them, againſt ſuch exact and real Holineſs as the Goſpel requires from them. So that if they periſh, they muſt blame themſelves for it, it is their own choice, they chuſe and prefer their Sins with all the Miſeries which attend them, before the Goſpel of Chriſt, with all the Glory and Happineſs which is offered in it; and therefore as God ſaid to his People, *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Ezek. 33. 11. So ſay I to theſe Men, repent and believe the Goſpel, for why will ye die, why will ye periſh eternally? Have you any reaſon for it? none in the World but your

your own Wills. Chriſt hath told you in plain terms, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, Joh. 6. 35. But if you will not come unto him, who can help that? Are not your ſelves only in the fault? Will not your Blood be upon your own Heads? What could Chriſt have done more for you than he hath done? What could he have ſuffered more for you than he hath ſuffered? How could he call you to him more plainly or pathetically than he doth? But if after all this, you will not come unto him, you muſt even thank your ſelves for all the Torments you muſt ere long ſuffer and undergo. And this is indeed the Caſe of the greateſt part of Mankind, that though they be called and invited to partake of all the Merits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion, yet they will not come unto him. And this is the firſt and great Reaſon why ſo many are called, and yet ſo few choſen, *Joh.* 5. 40.

2. The ſecond Reaſon is becauſe Men do not really believe that they are invited to ſuch glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour himſelf intimates in the Parable. For when they who were bidden, would not come upon the firſt Invitation, as not believing the Meſſage which thoſe Ser-

Servants brought them, the King ſent forth other Servants, ſaying, *Tell them which are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage*, Matt. 22. 4. When the firſt Servants were not believed, he ſent others with fuller Inſtructions, giving them orders to acquaint the Gueſts, that all things were now ready, and to aſſure them that it was to a Marriage-Feaſt they were invited. But it ſeems, whatſoever the firſt or ſecond Servants could ſay, it was to no purpoſe, they would not believe them, and therefore ſent them away as they came; whereby our Saviour exactly diſcovers to us the entertainment that his Goſpel always did, and ſtill would meet with in the World. Before his own coming into the World, he ſent his Prophets to invite Mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their Sins might be blotted out, and their Souls admitted into the Grace and Favour of Almighty God, and ſo partake of eternal Glory, which the Prophets called Men to, under the notion of a Feaſt, *A feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well*

well refined, Iſa. 25. 6. which they called all Men to, ſaying, *Ho, every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters*, Iſa. 55. 1. But how their Meſſage was received, the ſame Prophet declares, ſaying, *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed*, Iſa. 53. 1. and ſo it is ſince. For when the Prophets could not be credited, God afterwards ſent his Apoſtles, and ſtill to this Day is ſending Servant after Servant to invite Men to Grace and Pardon, to Heaven and eternal Happineſs. But we his Miniſters may ſtill ſay with the Prophet, *Who hath believed our report?* We tell Men that unleſs they repent and turn to God, Iniquity will be their ruin; we tell them alſo, that if they believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, they ſhall be ſaved, and if they be holy here, they ſhall be happy hereafter. But what ſignifies our telling them of theſe things, if they believe not what we ſay? And yet who doth? Men give us the hearing, cenſure what they have heard, and that is all the uſe they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one Truth that we make known or expound unto them; and this being the caſe not only of ſome few, but of the greateſt part of Mankind, hence

it comes to paſs that ſo many are called and ſo few are choſen, even becauſe they who are called do not believe it, and ſo it is all one with them whether they be called or no. Be ſure God chuſeth none but ſuch as believe the word he ſends unto them; for as the Apoſtle ſaith, *God hath choſen the poor of this world rich in faith*, Jam. 2. 5. If they be not rich in Faith, they are not for his purpoſe, and ſeeing there are but few that are ſo; hence of the *many* which *are called*, there are *but few choſen.*

3. Another Reaſon why of the many which are called there are ſo few choſen, is becauſe they have no real Eſteem or Value for the things they are called to; as it is in the Parable, when the Servants were ſent to call upon them to make haſte to the Feaſt becauſe all things were ready, it is ſaid that they made light of it, *ver.* 5. They did not think it worth their while to go, though it was to a Feaſt, to a Marriage Feaſt, yea, to the Marriage Feaſt of ſo great a Perſon as a King's Son; no, not though they were invited by the King himſelf unto it. Thus it was in ancient times, and thus it is ſtill; the King of Heaven ſends to invite Men to his Court, to lay aſide their filthy Garments,

and

and to put on the Robes that he hath prepared for them, that they may be holy as he is holy, and ſo live with him and be happy for ever. But they make light of ſuch things as theſe, they can ſee no ſuch Beauty in Chriſt, why they ſhould deſire him, no ſuch Excellency in God himſelf, why they ſhould be in love with him; and as for Heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no; though they be called, they matter not whether they be choſen to it or no; and hence likewiſe it is that of the many which are called, there are ſo few choſen.

4. Another Reaſon is, becauſe they who are called are generally addicted to the things of this Life, they have the Serpent's Curſe upon them, to feed upon the Duſt of the Earth, and therefore ſlight all the Overtures that are made them of Heaven and eternal Happineſs. As our Saviour himſelf intimates in this Parable, ſaying, that *when they were invited they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandiſe*, ver. 5. Thus we read of the Phariſees, that they being covetous, when they heard the Words of Chriſt, they derided him, *Luke* 16. 14. And thus it is to this

Day; though Men be called to Chriſt, they are ſo much taken up with worldly Buſineſſes, that they can find no time to come unto him; but away they go again, one to his Trade, another to his Merchandiſe. Theſe are the things that moſt Mens Minds are wholly bent upon; and therefore they will not be perſuaded to leave them to go to Chriſt. It is true, if he called them to great Eſtates, if he called them to a good Bargain, if he called them to Crowns and Scepters in this World, then they would all ſtrive which ſhould be choſen firſt. But the things that he calls us to are quite of another nature; he calls us to repent of our Sins, to believe in him, to contemn the World, to have our Converſations in Heaven. But theſe are things which Men do not love to hear of, as being contrary to their earthly temper and inclinations; and therefore we who are God's Miniſters may call our Hearts out before they will ſet themſelves in good earneſt to mind them. Or to bring it home ſtill cloſer to us, how often have we all been invited to that ſpiritual Feaſt, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole Congregation is called to partake of it? Scarce one in

twenty

twenty think it worth their while to ſtay, to have their ſhare in it. What can be the reaſon of this, but that our Minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater Concernment to us than all the Merits of Chriſt's Death and Paſſion. And therefore it is no wonder that ſo many of us are called, and ſo few choſen, ſeeing we our ſelves chuſe the Toys and Trifles of this tranſient World, before all thoſe real Joys which in the Goſpel we are called and invited to.

5. In the next Place, many of them which are called, have ſo ſtrange an antipathy to God and Goodneſs, that they do not only neglect and ſlight their heavenly, in compariſon of their earthly Calling, but they hate and abuſe ſuch as are ſent to call them, as our Saviour himſelf intimates, *ver.* 6. O barbarous Cruelty! What hurt, what injury is done unto them? They are invited to a Feaſt, and for this they are angry, and kill the Meſſengers which are ſent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all Ages. This was the Entertainment, this the Requital that moſt of the Prophets received for the divine Meſſage they brought to Mankind; *Mat.* 23. 37. Yea, Chriſt himſelf, the Son and Heir of God, was put to Death for in-

viting Men to Life and Happineſs, and ſo were his Apoſtles too: And ſo it is to this Day. There is ſtill a ſecret malice and hatred in Mens Hearts againſt ſuch as ſincerely endeavour to preach the Goſpel clearly and fully to them. We tell them of their Sins, we acquaint them with the Danger they are in, we call upon them to forſake and avoid them, we invite them to Chriſt, and ſo to Heaven and eternal Happineſs; and for this many of them are angry with us and incenſed againſt us. They may forgive us this wrong, I can aſſure them we intend them no Evil, but all the Good we do or can deſire to our own Souls; and whatſoever the Succeſs be, it is ſtill our Duty to call upon them, to adviſe them of their Duty, and if poſſible reclaim them from their Sins; and if they be angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's ſaying, that *many are called, but few choſen.*

6. The laſt Reaſon which our Saviour gives in this Parable, why *many are called, but few choſen*, is becauſe of thoſe who are called, and come too at their Call, many come not aright, which he ſignifies by the Man that came without his Wedding-garment, *ver.* 11, 12, 13. where

where although he mentions but one Man, yet under that one is comprehended all of the ſame kind, even all ſuch Perſons as have the Goſpel preached to them, and ſo are called and invited to all the Graces and Privileges propoſed in it, all ſuch as profeſs to believe in Chriſt, and to expect Happineſs and Salvation from him, yet will not come up to the Terms which he propounds in his Goſpel to them, even to *walk worthy of the Vacation wherewith they are called*, Eph. 4. 1. And indeed this is the great reaſon of all why of ſo many which are called there are ſo few choſen, becauſe there are ſo few which do all things which the Goſpel requires of them. Many like *Herod* will do many things, *Mark.* 6. 20. and are almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians, as *Agrippa* was, *Acts* 26. 28. How zealous are ſome for, how violent are others againſt, the little Ceremonies and Circumſtances of Religion, and in the mean while neglect and let ſlip the Power and Subſtance of it? How demure are ſome in their Carriage towards Men, but irreverent and ſlovenly in the Worſhip of Almighty God? How devout would others ſeem towards God, but are ſtill careleſs and negligent of their Duty towards Men?

Some are all for the Duties of the firſt Table without the ſecond, others for the ſecond without the firſt. Some are altogether for Obedience and good Works, without Faith in Chriſt; others are as much for Faith in Chriſt, without Obedience and good Works. Some would do all themſelves, as if Chriſt had done nothing for them; others fancy that Chriſt hath ſo done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themſelves to do: And ſo betwixt both theſe ſorts of People, which are the far greater part of thoſe who are called, either the Merits or elſe the Laws of Chriſt are ſlighted and contemned. But is this the way to be ſaved? No, ſurely: If I know any thing of the Goſpel, it requires both Repentance and Faith in Chriſt, that we perform ſincere Obedience to all his Laws, and yet truſt in him, and him alone, for Pardon, Acceptance and Salvation. And whoſoever comes ſhort of this, though he be called, we may be ſure he is not choſen; tho' he come to the Marriage Feaſt with thoſe that are invited, yet wanting his Wedding Garment, he will be caſt out again with Shame and Confuſion of Face. So that it is not our doing ſome, or many, or moſt of the things which the Goſpel

requires, that will do our Buſineſs, unleſs we do all to the utmoſt of our Skill and Power. But where ſhall we find the Man that doth ſo? What ground have we to acknowledge that our Saviour had but too much cauſe to ſay, *Many are called, but few choſen*; which I fear is but too true, not only of others, but our ſelves too.

I ſay not this to diſcourage any one: No, it is my hearty Deſire and Prayer to the Eternal God, that every Soul of us might be choſen and ſaved. But my great Fear is, that many think it ſo eaſie a matter to go to Heaven, that if they do but ſay their Prayers, and hear Sermons now and then, they cannot miſs of it, and therefore need not trouble themſelves any farther about it. But they muſt give me leave to tell them, that this will not ſerve their turn; if it would, moſt of thoſe which are called would be choſen too. Whereas our Saviour himſelf tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging of us, that it ſhould rather excite us to greater Diligence about it than heretofore we may have uſed, as our Saviour himſelf intimates in his Anſwer to this Queſtion, *Luke* 13. 23, 24. And verily, what greater

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Encouragement can we have than to conſider, that tho' there be but few choſen, yet there are ſome? For why may not you and I be in the number of thoſe few as well as others? Are not we all called to Chriſt? Are not we all invited, yea, commanded to believe in his Name, and obey his Goſpel, that ſo we may partake of everlaſting Glory? Let us then all ſet upon that Work in good earneſt, which we are called to. Let us but fear God, and keep his Commandments, and believe in his Son for his Acceptance of us, and then we need not fear, but though of the many others which are called there are but few choſen, yet we few who are all called ſhall be all choſen; choſen to live with God himſelf, and Jeſus Chriſt, and to ſing forth his Praiſes for evermore.

THOUGHTS

P. Lavergne Inv: H. Hulsbergh Sculp.

For the Lord God is a SUN. PS. LXXXIV. 11.

THOUGHTS

UPON

The Appearance of Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, or the Beatifick Viſion.

SO long as we are in the Body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its Senſes, ſeldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through one or other of them. Though we are all able to abſtract our Thoughts when we pleaſe from Matter, and fix them upon Things that are purely ſpiritual; there are but few that ever do it. But few, even among thoſe alſo that have ſuch things revealed to them by God himſelf, and ſo have infinitely more

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and firmer ground to believe them, than any one, or all their Senſes put together can afford. Such are the great Truths of the Goſpel, for which we have the infallible Word and Teſtimony of the ſupreme Truth; yet ſeeing they are not the Objects of Senſe, but only of our Faith, though we profeſs to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them, and are uſually no more affected with them, than as if there were no ſuch things in being. Hence it hath pleaſed God, in great Compaſſion to our Infirmity, not only to reveal and make known ſuch ſpiritual Things to us, in plain and eaſie Terms, but likewiſe to bring them as near as poſſible to our Senſes, by repreſenting them to us under the Names and Characters of ſuch ſenſible Objects as bear the greateſt Reſemblance to them; that we who are led ſo much by our Senſes, may by them alſo be directed how to apprehend thoſe ſpiritual Objects which he hath told us of, on purpoſe that we may believe them upon his Word.

Thus he often uſeth the Words, Hand, Eye, and the like, to ſignifie his own divine Perfections to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the Goſpel to the

the People, by Parables, and Similitudes of things commonly ſeen and done among themſelves. The Prophets alſo frequently took the ſame Courſe, as might be ſhewn by many Inſtances; but one of the moſt remarkable is that in *Mal.* 4. 2. where the Prophet in the Name of God ſpeaking of Chriſt's coming into the World, expreſſeth it by the riſing of the Sun, ſaying, *To you that fear my name ſhall the Sun of righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings.*

For that Jeſus Chriſt is that Sun of Righteouſneſs here ſpoken of, is ſo plain from the Context, and whole Deſign of the Prophet, that I need not inſiſt upon the proving it; but ſhall only obſerve, that this being the laſt of all the Prophets in the Old Teſtament, he ſhuts up his own, and all the other Propheſies, with a clear Prediction of Chriſt, and his Fore-runner *John the Baptiſt*, whom he calls *Elijah* or *Elias*, and concludes his Prophecy with theſe Words concerning him, *Behold I will ſend you Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he ſhall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, leaſt I come and ſmite the earth*

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(or rather the Land) *with a curſe*, Mal. 4. 5, 6. For that by *Elijah* is here meant *John the Baptiſt*, we are aſſured by Chriſt himſelf, *Matt.* 11. 14. And it is very obſervable, that as this Prophet ends the Old Teſtament with a Prediction of *Elias*, ſo St. *Luke* begins the New with a relation how *John the Baptiſt* was born, and ſo came into the World a little before Chriſt, as the Morning Star that appeared before the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs.

But of the Day which ſhall come at the riſing of that glorious Sun, the Prophet ſaith, that it *ſhall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, ſhall be ſtubble, and the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, that it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch*, ver. 1. It will be a terrible Day to thoſe that ſhall obſtinately refuſe to walk in the Light of it; they ſhall be all conſumed, as we read the unbelieving *Jews* were at the Deſtruction of *Hieruſalem*, that happened ſoon after that Sun was up. But then turning himſelf, as it were, to his own People, Almighty God here by his Prophet chears and comforts them, ſaying to them, *But unto you that fear my Name ſhall the*

Sun

Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings, &c. He ſhall ariſe to all, but to the other with ſuch a ſcorching Heat as ſhall burn them up, to theſe with healing in his Wings, or Rays, ſo as not to hurt, but heal them of all their Maladies.

That which I chiefly deſign by God's Aſſiſtance, to ſhew from theſe Words, is, what Thoughts they ſuggeſt to us concerning our bleſſed Saviour, by calling him *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*. But to make the way as plain as I can, we muſt firſt conſider, to whom he is here ſaid to *ariſe with healing in his wings*, even to thoſe that fear the Name of God; *i. e.* to thoſe who firmly believing in God, and being fully perſuaded of his infinite Power, Juſtice and Mercy, and alſo of the Truth of all his Threats and Promiſes, ſtand continually in awe of him, not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend him, nor leave any thing undone that he would have them do. Such, and ſuch only, can be truly ſaid to fear God. And therefore the Fear of God in the Scriptures, eſpecially of the Old Teſtament, is all along put for the whole Duty of Man. There being no Duty that a Man owes, either to

God

God or his Neighbour, but if he really fears God, he will endeavour all he can to do it. But this neceſſarily ſuppoſeth his Belief in God, and his holy Word, or rather proceeds originally from it. *For he that cometh unto God, ſo as to fear* and obey him, *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him;* Heb. 11. 6. So that as no Man can believe in God, but he muſt needs fear him; ſo no Man can fear God, unleſs he firſt believes in him. From whence it neceſſarily follows, that by thoſe who are here ſaid to fear the Name of God, we can underſtand no other but only ſuch as are poſſeſſed with a firm Belief in him, and with a full Perſuaſion of the Truth and Certainty of thoſe divine Revelations that he hath made of himſelf, and of his Will to Mankind, and therefore live accordingly.

Of theſe, and theſe only, it is here ſaid, that to them *ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings.* Not to any other; no other being able to ſee his Light, nor capable of thoſe healing Influences that proceed from him. For though he be a Sun, he is not ſuch a Sun as we ſee with our bodily Eyes

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in the Firmament, but *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, ſhining in the higheſt Heavens, beyond the reach of our Senſes, viſible only to the Eye of Faith, the Evidence of things not ſeen. Inſomuch that although he be riſen, and darts down his Beams to this lower World continually, yet they who have not Faith, can neither ſee him, nor enjoy any more Benefit by him, than as if he was not riſen, or did not ſhine at all. As if a Man be born ſtark blind, though the Sun ſhines never ſo clear about him, he ſees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at Noonday as much as at Midnight; neither can ye ever make him underſtand what Light or Colours are; for having not that Senſe, by which alone ſuch things can be perceived, he can never underſtand what you mean by ſuch things, ſo as to form any true Notion of them in his Mind. So it is in our preſent Caſe; though the Sun of Righteouſneſs be riſen, and ſhines moſt gloriouſly in the World, yet being the Object only of our Faith, without that a Man can diſcern nothing of him. He may perhaps talk of him as a blind Man may talk of Light, but all the while he knows not what he means by the Words which he uſeth about him. For he uſeth them only as

Words in courſe, taken up from thoſe he talks with, without having any Effect or Operation at all upon his Mind; whereas they who really believe God's Word, and what is there revealed concerning the Sun of Righteouſneſs; they ſee his Light, they feel his Heat, they experience the Power and Efficacy of his Influences; and therefore, although they who have not Faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they ſhall hear or read of him, yet they who have, and act it upon what they hear or read out of God's holy Word concerning him, they will find their Thoughts or Apprehenſions of him cleared up, and their Affections enflamed to him; ſo as to love and honour him for the future, as the Fountain of all that ſpiritual Life, and Light, and Joy they have. *For to them he will ariſe with healing in his wings.*

He did not only ariſe once, but he continually ariſeth to thoſe who believe in God, and fear him. For thus ſaith the Lord, *to you that fear my Name ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings.* It is true, he ſpeaks more eſpecially of his Incarnation, or viſible Appearance in the World; but by this manner of ſpeaking, he intimates withal that this Sun of Righteouſneſs is always

always ſhining upon his faithful People, more or leſs, in all Ages from the beginning to the end of the World. For in that it is ſaid *he ſhall ariſe*, it is plainly ſuppoſed that he was the Sun of Righteouſneſs before, and gave Light unto the World, though not ſo clearly as when he was actually riſen. As we ſee and enjoy the light of the Sun, long before he riſeth, from the firſt dawning of the Day, though it grows clearer and clearer, all along as he comes nearer and nearer to his riſing; ſo the Sun of Righteouſneſs began to enlighten the World as ſoon as it was darkened by Sin; the Day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every Age. *Adam* himſelf ſaw ſomething of this Light, *Abraham* more; *Abraham rejoyced to ſee my Day*, ſaith this glorious Sun; *he ſaw it, and was glad*, Joh. 8. 56. *David* and the Prophets after him ſaw it moſt clearly, eſpecially this, the laſt of the Prophets: He ſaw this Sun in a manner riſing, ſo that he could tell the People that it would ſuddenly get above their Horizon, *The Lord whom ye ſeek*, ſaith he, *ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple*, Mal. 3. 1. and acquaints them alſo with the happy Influences it would have upon them, ſaying, in the Name of God,

Unto you that fear my name ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing in his wings.

The Sun of Righteouſneſs; that is, as I obſerved before, *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*, who is often foretold and ſpoke of under the name and notion of the Sun or Star that giveth light unto the World. *There ſhall come a ſtar out of Jacob*, ſaid *Balaam*, Num. 24. 17. *And he ſhall be as the light of the morning when the ſun riſeth*, ſaith *David*, 2 Sam. 23. 4. And the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaking of his coming, ſaith, *The people that walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the ſhadow of Death, upon them hath the light ſhined*; Iſa. 9. 2. For that this was ſpoken of Chriſt, we have the Authority of the Evangeliſt, *Mat.* 4. 16. To the ſame purpoſe is that of the ſame Prophet, *Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold the darkneſs ſhall cover the earth, and groſs darkneſs the people, but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee*, Iſa. 60. 1, 2. *The Sun ſhall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightneſs ſhall the moon give light unto thee. But the Lord ſhall be unto thee an ever-*

everlasting light, and thy glory, v. 19, 20. To which we may add the many places where Christ is called צמח which we translate *the Branch*. As, *I will bring forth my servant the Branch*, Zech. 3. 8. *Behold the man, whose name is the Branch*, c. 6. 8. *I will raise up to David, a righteous Branch*, Jer. 23. 5. *And a Branch of righteousness*, c. 33. 15. In all which places the original Word signifies also *the rising of the Sun*, and is accordingly rendred by the LXX Ἀνατολὴ, *Oriens*, not that part of Heaven where the Sun riseth, but the Sun it self as rising there. And so it is translated also both in the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Versions. And where it is said, *In that Day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful*, Isa. 4. 2. In the LXX it is ἐπιλάμψει ὁ Θεὸς, *God shall shine forth*. In the *Syriack* ܕܢܚܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ *The rising of the Lord shall be for glory*. In *Arabick*, يشرق ة الله *The Lord shall rise as the sun*. And that this is the true sense of the Word in all these places, appears from the Prophecy of *Zacharias* the Father of *John the Baptist*; for speaking of Christ's coming, he expresseth it, according to our Translation, by saying, *The Day spring from on high hath visited us*, Luke 1. 78. But

in the Original it is the ſame Word that the LXX uſe in all the aforeſaid places, Ἀνατολὴ, *Oriens, the riſing Sun.* And it is much to be obſerved, that all the ſaid places of the Prophets, are interpreted of the Meſſiah or Chriſt; by the *Targum* or *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, made by the ancient *Jews* themſelves; for צמח *the riſing Sun*, is there tranſlated משיחא *the Chriſt*, as if it was only another name for Meſſiah, the Saviour of the World. From all which it appears, that when the Prophet here calls our Saviour Chriſt *the ſun of righteouſneſs*, he ſpeaks according to the common ſenſe and practice of the Church at the time.

And verily he may well be called the Sun, both in reſpect of what he is in himſelf, and in reſpect of what he is to us. As there is but one Sun in the Firmament, it is the chief of all Creatures that we ſee in the World. There is nothing upon Earth, but what is vaſtly inferior, the very Stars of Heaven ſeem no way comparable to it; it is the top, the head, the glory of all viſible Objects: In like manner, as there is but one Saviour in the World, he is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the Sun it ſelf, but above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that

that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come. *All things are put under his feet, and he is given to be head over all things to the Church*, Eph. 1. 21, 22. The very Angels, Authorities and Powers of Heaven, *are all made ſubject to him*, 1 Pet. 3. 22. And that is the reaſon that he is ſaid to be at the right Hand of God, becauſe he is preferred before, and ſet over the whole Creation, next to the Almighty Creator himſelf, where he now reigns, and doth whatſoever he pleaſeth in Heaven and Earth.

And as the Sun is in it ſelf alſo the moſt glorious, as well as the moſt excellent Creature we ſee, of ſuch tranſcendent Beauty, Splendor and Glory, that we cannot look ſtedfaſtly upon it, but our Eyes are preſently dazled; ſo is Chriſt, *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*: When he was tranſfigured, *his face did ſhine as the ſun*, Mat. 17. 2. When St. *John* had a glimpſe of him, *he ſaw his countenance as the ſun that ſhineth in his ſtrength*, Rev. 1. 16. When he appeared to St. *Paul* going to *Damaſcus* at mid-day, *there was a light above the brightneſs of the ſun ſhining round about him, and them that journied with him*, Acts 26. 13. And it is no won-

der, *For he is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. 1. 3. and therefore muſt needs ſhine more gloriouſly than it is poſſible for any mere Creature to do; his very Body, by reaſon of its Union to the divine Perſon, *is a glorious Body*, Phil. 3. 21. The moſt glorious doubtleſs of all the Bodies in the World, as far exceeding the Sun, as that doth a Clod of Earth; inſomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as he now ſhines forth in all his Glory in the higheſt Heavens, how would our Eyes be dazled? our whole Souls amazed and confounded at his excellent Glory? The Sun would appear to us no otherwiſe than as the Moon and Stars do, when the Sun is up. And he that ſo far excels the Sun in that very Property, wherein the Sun excels all other things, may well be called the Sun. The Sun by way of Præeminence, the moſt glorious Sun in the World, in compariſon whereof nothing elſe deſerves to be called by that Name. Neither may our bleſſed Saviour be juſtly called by this glorious Name, only for what he is in himſelf, but likewiſe from what he doth for us; as may be eaſily demonſtrated from all the Benefits that we receive from the Sun, I ſhall inſtance in ſome of the moſt plain and obvious.

Firſt

Firſt therefore, the Sun we know is the Fountain of all the Light that we have upon Earth, without which we could ſee nothing, not ſo much as the way that is before us, but ſhould be always groping and ſtumbling in the dark, whereas by it we can diſcern every thing that is about us, or at any diſtance from us, as far as our ſight can reach. In which reſpect our bleſſed Lord is the Sun indeed; *The light of the world*, Joh. 8. 12. *The true light that lighteneth every one that cometh into the world*, c. 1. 9. *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Iſrael*, Luke 2. 32. *A marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Whereby we can ſee things that are not viſible to the Eye, as plainly as we do thoſe that are. For *this day ſpring from on high*, this Sun of Righteouſneſs hath viſited us, *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace*, Lue 1. 78, 79. To ſhew us the inviſible things of God, and direct us to all things belonging to our everlaſting Peace and Happineſs. He hath made them all clear and manifeſt to us in his Goſpel, *But whatſoever maketh manifeſt is light*, Eph. 5. 13. Wherefore he is ſaid to have brought *life and immortality to light*

through

through the Goſpel, 2 Tim. 1. 10. Becauſe he hath there ſo clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of his holy Goſpel we may ſee all things neceſſary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal Life, as plainly as we can ſee the moſt viſible Objects at Noon-day.

By this Light we can ſee as much of the Glory of God himſelf, as our mortal Nature can bear. For *No man hath ſeen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the boſome of the Father, he hath declared him*, Joh. 1. 18. *Neither knoweth any Man the Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him*, Matth. 11. 27. So that no Man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by his Son our Saviour Chriſt. But by this means, they that lived before might ſee him as by twilight, we who live after this Sun is riſen, may ſee him by the cleareſt Light that can be given of him, for he hath fully revealed and declared him to us in the Goſpel.

By this glorious Light we can ſee into the Myſtery of the eternal Trinity in Unity, ſo as to believe that God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt are one, one *Jehovah*, one God. That God the Father made

made all things at the firſt by his Word, and ſtill upholds and orders all things according to his Will. That God the Son was made Fleſh, became Man, and as ſuch died upon the Croſs, and ſo offered up himſelf as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World; that he roſe again, went up to Heaven, and is now there at the right Hand of God; that upon our Repentance and Faith in him our Sins are all pardoned, and he that made us is reconciled to us by the Merits of his ſaid Death; that by the Power of his Interceſſion which he now makes in Heaven for us, we are juſtified or accounted righteous in him, before his, and in him our Almighty Father; that God the Holy Ghoſt abides continually with his Church, moving upon, actuating and influencing the means of Grace that are there adminiſtred; that he ſanctifies all that believe in Chriſt, leads them into all Truth, comforts them in all their Troubles, and aſſiſts them in doing whatſoever is required of them. Theſe and many ſuch great and neceſſary Truths as lay in a great meaſure hid before, are now by the Light of the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining in his Goſpel, made ſo plain and evident, that all may ſee them, except they wilfully ſhut their Eyes,

Eyes, or turn their Backs upon them.

And though the Sun in the Firmament enlightens only the Air, to make it a fit *medium* through which to ſee; this glorious Light that comes from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, enlightens Mens Minds too, and opens their Eyes, *to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the law of God*, Pſal. 119. 18. And that too ſo effectually in ſome, that they likewiſe are able to enlighten others, to open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkneſs to Light, *Acts* 26. 18. Inſomuch that they alſo are the Light of the World, *Matt.* 5. 14. not originally in themſelves, but by communication from him, as the Moon is firſt enlightened by the Sun, and then reflects its light to the Earth.

Moreover, the Sun is the firſt Cauſe under God, not only of Light, but alſo of all the Life that is in any Creature upon Earth, without which nothing could live, no, not ſo much as a Vegetable, much leſs an Animal Life; for that which we call Life, wherewith ſuch Creatures as have Organs fitted for it, are actuated and quickened, ſo as to be ſaid properly to live, it all depends upon the heat and influences of the Sun; ſhould the Sun once ceaſe to be, or to influence the

World,

World, all living Creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Chriſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs, the Fountain of all ſpiritual Life. *In thee*, ſaith *David*, *is the fountain of life, in thy light we ſhall ſee light*, Pſal. 36. 9. Where we ſee that Light and Life in this ſenſe alſo go together; they both proceed from the ſame Fountain, *the Sun of Righteouſneſs*, who therefore ſaith, *I am the light of the world, he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life*, Joh. 8. 12. that Light which hath Life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; ſo that he is both Light and Life it ſelf. *I am*, ſaith he, *the way, the truth, and the life*, Joh. 14. 6. And *our Life*, as the Apoſtle calls him, *Col.* 3. 4. *even the life of all that believe in him. The life that I now live in the fleſh*, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. *And therefore he who believeth, and ſo hath the Son, he hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life*, 1 Joh. 5. 12.

From all which it appears, that *All Men by Nature are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. 2. 1. *But when any ariſe from the dead by faith, it is Chriſt that gives them life*, c. 5. 14. *Who came into the world*

on

on purpoſe that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, Joh. 10. 10. more abundantly, that is, in the higheſt and moſt excellent manner that it is poſſible for Men to live. For this Life which the Sun of Righteouſneſs raiſeth Believers to, is the Life of Righteouſneſs, an holy, an heavenly, a ſpiritual, divine Life; it is the Life of Faith, whereby they live to other Purpoſes, and in a quite different manner from other Men; they live to God, and not unto the World; they live in a conſtant Dependance upon him, and Submiſſion to him; they live with a firm Belief of his Word, and ſincere Obedience to his Laws; they live altogether in his Service, ſo that *whether they eat, or drink, or whatſoever they do, they ſtill do it to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. In ſhort, they ſtrive all they can to do the Will of God upon Earth, as the holy Angels do it in Heaven, and ſo have their Converſation there, where their Saviour and their Treaſure is.

But this Life is infuſed into them, only by the Rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, by that Holy Spirit which proceedeth from Chriſt, whereby they being born again, and made the Children of Light, thus walk in newneſs of Life;

and

and ſo it is nouriſhed alſo, preſerved and ſtrengthned only by him, who therefore calls himſelf *the bread of life*, John 6. 35, 48. And the Bread of God, *which cometh from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, v. 33. *the living bread, of which if any man eat, he ſhall live for ever*, v. 51. And this Bread which he gives is his Fleſh, *which he gave for the life of the world*, ibid. *For his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; ſo that whoſo eateth his fleſh and drinketh his blood hath eternal life, and he will raiſe him up at the laſt day, that he may live for ever*, v. 54, 55, 58. For *Chriſt is the reſurrection and the life, whoſoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live, and whoſoever liveth and believeth in him ſhall never die*, c. 11. 25, 26. Though his Body may die, yet not his Soul. And his Body alſo at the laſt Day ſhall be raiſed again to Life, by the power of this glorious Sun. *For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. 15. 22.

Seeing therefore that Jeſus Chriſt is the Fountain of the Life of Righteouſneſs, the Author of that ſpiritual and eternal Life which the righteous live; as the Sun is of our natural, he alſo may

moſt

moſt properly be called the Sun, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as he is in the Words before us. And ſo he may be likewiſe from his chearing and refreſhing our Spirits in the inward Man, as the Sun doth in the outward. *The light of the eyes*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *rejoiceth the heart*, Prov. 15. 30. *And truly the light it ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the ſun*, Eccleſ. 11. 7. This we all find by daily Experience, and ſo we do too, that the Light and Heat of the Sun agitate or move our animal Spirits in ſo benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more chearful and pleaſant when the Sun ſhines clearly, than we are in a dark Night or cloudy Day. But in this the Sun of Righteouſneſs infinitely exceeds the other, for he is the Fountain not only of ſome, but of all the true Joy and Comfort that his faithful People have or ever can have in the World. It all proceeds from him, whom having not ſeen they love, in whom, though now they ſee him not, yet *believing they rejoyce, with joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been delivered for their Offences, and raiſed again for their Juſtification, he manifeſteth himſelf, and his ſpecial Love and Favour

vour to them, in the Pardon of their Sins, and their Reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their Souls are filled, not only with unſpeakable, but glorious Joy, of the ſame Nature with that which the glorified Saints in Heaven are continually tranſported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's Countenance, and his cauſing his Face to ſhine upon them, *Pſal.* 4. 6. *Pſal.* 67. 1. *Pſal.* 80. 3. *Numb.* 6. 25. When the Sun of Righteouſneſs thus ſhineth upon them, refreſhing and comforting their Hearts, by the ſweet Influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.

But the Sun doth not only refreſh the Earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by his means, under God, that Plants grow and bring forth Fruit, and that Animals do the reſpective Works which God hath ſet them. So is Chriſt the Cauſe or Author of all the good and righteous Works that are done in the World; he himſelf ſaith, *without me ye can do nothing*, John 15. 5. And his Apoſtle could ſay upon his own Experience, *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me*, Phil. 4. 13. And that the Fruits, all the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, are by Jeſus Chriſt, or come from him, *Chap.* 1. 11.

who therefore in this reſpect alſo may well be termed *the Sun of Righteouſneſs.*

To which we may likewiſe add, that as the Works which God hath made upon Earth by his Power, although they have no light in themſelves whereby they can be ſeen, yet they appear in all their Beauty and Colours by the Sun reflecting his light upon them; ſo the Works which his Servants do, by his Aſſiſtance and Grace, although they have no real Worth, nor are exactly righteous in themſelves, yet by the Sun of Righteouſneſs reflecting his Righteouſneſs upon them, they ſeem or are accounted righteous in the ſight of God, or as St. *Peter* ſpeaks, *they are acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. without whom therefore there could be no ſuch thing as Righteouſneſs ſeen upon Earth, no more than there could be Colours without Light. But *as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one many are made righteous*, Rom. 5. 19. both ſincerely righteous in themſelves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by his Righteouſneſs imputed to them. So that all Righteouſneſs, both as it is performed by Men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jeſus Chriſt.

And

And this ſeems to be the great Reaſon wherefore he is here called in a peculiar manner the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and promiſed to ariſe to his faithful People *with healing in his wings*, that they may *grow up as calves in the ſtalls*; to ſhew that it is by him only that they are healed of their Infirmities, and reſtored to a ſound Mind, ſo as to grow in Grace, and bring forth the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, ſuch Righteouſneſs as by him is acceptable to God, from whom they ſhall therefore at the laſt Day receive the Crown of Righteouſneſs, that Crown which this Sun of Righteouſneſs hath procured for them.

Upon theſe, among many other Accounts, Jeſus Chriſt the Saviour of Mankind may truly be called the Sun of Righteouſneſs, as he is here by the Spirit of Truth it ſelf, for our Admonition and Comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our bleſſed Saviour, and to exerciſe our Faith in him, ſo as to love and honour him with all our Hearts, and to put our whole Truſt and Confidence in him for all things neceſſary to our eternal Salvation. Foraſmuch as we are by this means given to

underſtand, that what the Sun is to this lower World, the ſame is Chriſt to his Church. But the Sun, as we have heard, is the moſt excellent, and moſt glorious thing that we ſee in the World. It is the next Cauſe, under God, of all the Light that is in the Air, and of all the Life that any Creatures live upon the Earth. It is that which refreſheth the Earth, and makes it fruitful. Is is that alſo which gives a Luſtre to all things that are about us, ſo as to make them pleaſing and delightful to the Eye.

And accordingly, whenſoever I think of my bleſſed Saviour, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, I apprehend, or rather by the Eye of Faith I behold him in the higheſt Heavens, there ſhining in Glory and Splendor infinitely greater than any mortal Eye can bear, inveſted with ſupreme Majeſty, Honour and Authority over the whole Creation. I behold him there ſurrounded with an innumerable Company of holy Angels, as ſo many fixed Stars, and of glorified Saints as Planets enlightened by him; all his *Satellites* or Servants waiting upon him, ready upon all Occaſions to reflect and convey his benign

benign Influences or Favours to his People upon Earth. I ſee him yonder, by his own Light; I behold him diſplaying his bright Beams, and diffuſing his Light round about, over his whole Church, both that which is triumphant in Heaven, and that which is militant here on Earth; that all the Members of it may ſee all things belonging to their Peace. I behold him continually ſending down his quickening Spirit upon thoſe who are baptized into, and believe in his holy Name, to regenerate them, to be a ſtanding Principle of a new and divine Life in them. I behold him there manifeſting himſelf, and cauſing his Face to ſhine upon thoſe who look up to him, ſo as to refreſh and cheer their Spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to run *with Patience the race that is ſet before them.* I behold him there continually iſſuing forth his Holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the Adminiſtration of his Word and Sacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in Grace, and be fruitful in every good Word and Work. I behold the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining with ſo much Power and Efficacy

cy upon his Church, that all the good Works which are done in it, though imperfect in themſelves, do notwithſtanding appear through him as good and righteous in the ſight of God himſelf, and are accordingly rewarded by him. In ſhort, as the Sun was made to rule and govern the Day, ſo I behold this Sun of Righteouſneſs as governing his Church, and ordering all things both within it and without it, ſo as to make them work together for the good of thoſe who love God, till he hath brought them all to himſelf, to live with him in the higheſt Heavens, where they alſo ſhall by his means *ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father for ever*, Mat. 13. 43.

Could we keep theſe and ſuch like Thoughts of our bleſſed Saviour always freſh in our Minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhining continually upon us and his whole Church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable Lives ſhould we then lead? We ſhould then deſpiſe the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, as nothing, as leſs than nothing in compariſon of this moſt glo-

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rious Sun and his Righteouſneſs. We ſhould then, with St. *Paul*, *count all thing but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, and ſhould *count them but dung that we may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having our own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, Phil. 3. 8, 9. We ſhould then leave gazing upon the trifles of this lower World, and ſhould be always looking up to this Sun of Righteouſneſs, ſo as to be enlightened by him, *Pſal.* 34. 5. with ſuch a Light as will diſcover to us the Glories of the other World, together with the Way that leads to it.

We ſhould then abhor and deteſt the Works of Darkneſs, and walk as the Children of Light, and accordingly ſhine as Lights in the World. And then we ſhould have the Light of God's Countenance ſhining continually upon us, enlightening, enlivening, and refreſhing our whole Souls, and purifying both our Hearts and Lives ſo, as to make us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints

Saints in Light; [illegible] Light which comes [illegible] Righteousness, who liveth and [illegible] eth, and shineth with the Father the Holy Ghost, one God, blesse ever.

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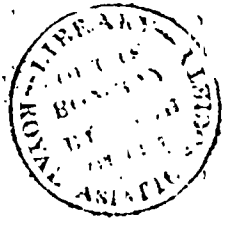

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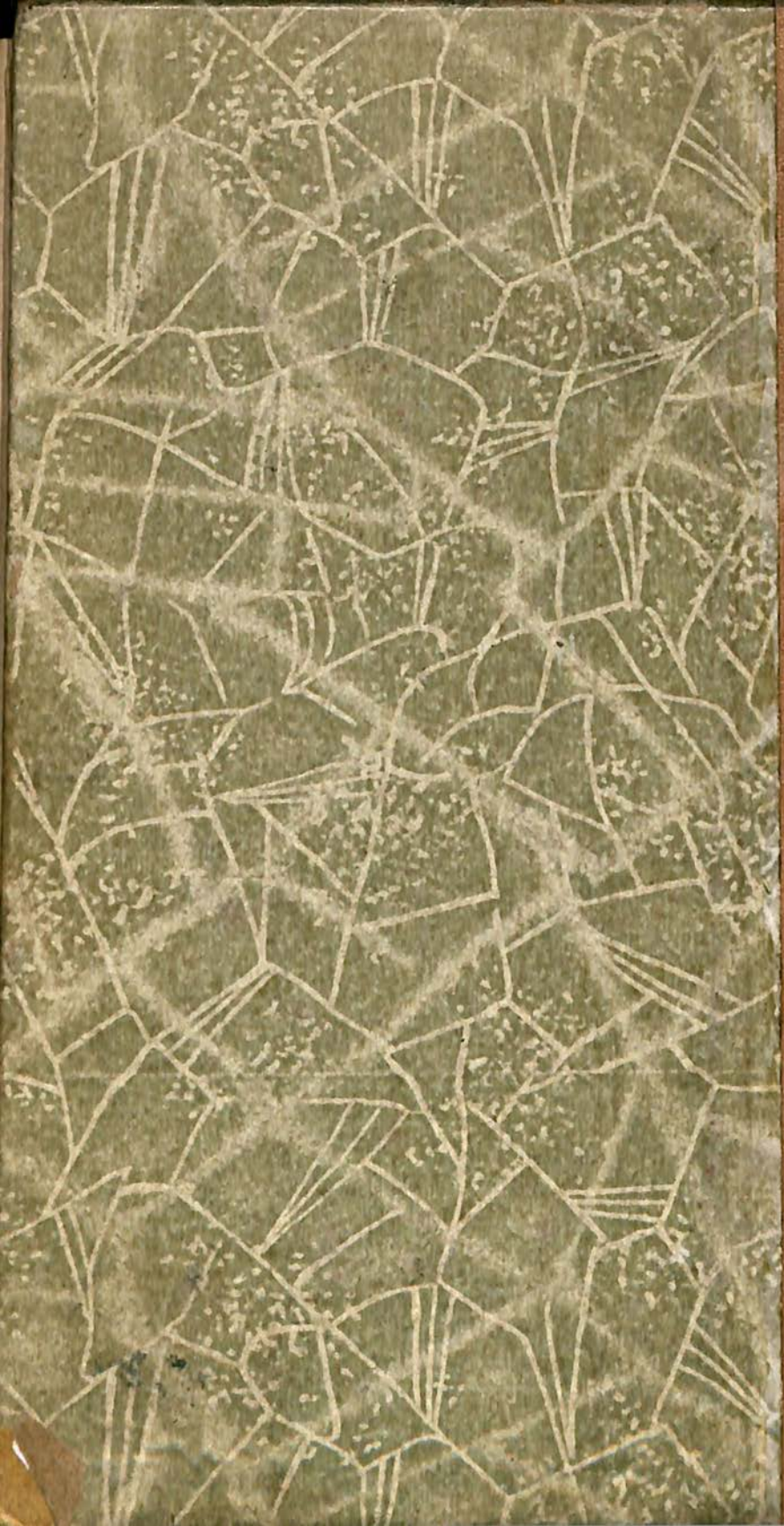
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